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BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN

CONSTABLE OF FRANCE
HIS LIFE AND TIMES

BY

ENOCH VINE STODDARD, A.M., M.D.

ILLUSTRATED

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK
27 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET
LONDON
24 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND
The Knickerbocker Press
1897

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To

MY FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

EDWARD HUBBARD LITCHFIELD

AND

WILLIAM RHINELANDER STEWART

I DEDICATE THIS SKETCH

PREFACE.

THIS narrative was originally sketched by the writer as one of a series of efforts to weave into association events and characters of history, in such manner as to prove interesting as well as instructive. It has been arranged for publication with the hope that it may prove acceptable to a larger circle than that for which it was originally written.

The era which it covers is a most attractive one. The chivalry of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries had reached its height, and its period of decadence had begun. The gentler influences which it had exerted over a rude and ignorant society, in its brilliant pageants, its romance, the songs of its troubadours, and its devotion to woman, were declining, and preparing to make way for the oncoming of an order in which the rights of the weak were to be better protected. The cross-bow, the battle-axe, and the coat of mail were to disappear before the power of gunpowder, and military force was to be employed to sustain, and not to destroy, the rights of the citizen.

The name of Bertrand du Guesclin is held in reverence by the Frenchman of to-day as that of one

by whose efforts the unity of ancient France was secured. The brilliancy of his life, filled as it was with events of thrilling interest, does not suffice to explain the affection and reverence which attach themselves to his name. The recognition of the inestimable services which he rendered to his country by his unselfish and unswerving patriotism, and the admiration which his personal character and remarkable exploits call forth, serve to surround him with an atmosphere almost legendary.

A great and loyal captain who, by the success of his arms, lifts his native land from the depths of distress and despondency, who frees her from her oppressors and replaces her firmly in her place among the great nations of the earth, is more than a hero, he is a saviour. It is in this light that the French patriot views Du Guesclin. He was to his country in the fourteenth, what Joan of Arc was in the following century.

To appreciate his full relation to the events of his time, we must recognise the decadence of French military glory, which had been so uninterruptedly brilliant during the preceding three centuries, as well as the progress which England had been making in military art. This first made itself felt in the defeat at Crécy, and later in the prostrating disaster at Poitiers.

Sprung from a humble Breton ancestry, with few advantages of position or of early education, Du Guesclin won his way from an obscure position to that of the first citizen of France, through the force of his own courage, integrity, prowess, and rare military genius.

Beginning his career in the struggle between John de Montfort and Charles de Blois for the succession to the Duchy of Brittany, he later led the Free Companies out of France, banished Peter the Cruel from the throne of Castile, and placed Henry of Trastamara upon it, and finally, as the Constable of France, drove the English almost entirely from their extensive possessions in that country.

The facts given in this sketch have been gathered from the chronicles of contemporaneous historians, as well as from those of subsequent periods, and such contributions as visits of the author to many of the sections in which the events occurred have afforded. The narrative of the Troubadour Cuvelhier and the Chronicles of Froissart have afforded much of minute detail. Morice, Rymer, Luce, and others have contributed verifications.

The repetition, however, of what others have well said is not the object of this sketch. It is written with the hope of placing the Breton hero in his true character and position, freed, on the one hand, from the influences of an inadequate estimate of the actual social and political conditions of his time, and, on the other, from the false conceptions of character, which naturally arise from the distance in time between the living present and remote past, as well as from the distortion produced by the roseate mists of a romantic atmosphere which envelop it.

E. V. S.

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FEUDAL FRANCE. 1320–1381

SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS OF THE PERIOD

BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN.

CHAPTER I.

YOUTH AND EARLY EDUCATION.

1320–1341.

Bertrand du Guesclin—His birth and early boyhood—Early education—Love for athletic sports—His youth—Influences impressing his later life—The fête at Rennes—His first military achievement.

ACCORDING to Cuvelhier,* a Trouvère of the fourteenth century, Bertrand du Guesclin was born in 1320, in the Castle of Motte-de-Broons, in the little village of Broons, situated south-west of Dinan, and not far from the town of Rennes in Brittany. His father was Robert du Guesclin, and his mother Jeanne du Malmains of Sens, near Fougères.

He was one of a large family consisting of four brothers and six sisters, he being the oldest of the sons; only one of his brothers, Olivier, lived to adult age and survived him.

* *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin*, par Cuvelhier, edited and published, in 1839, at Paris by E. Charrière.

His early years seem to have been spent unhappily. He was plain and unattractive in his features and personal appearance, and does not appear to have won the love and sympathy of his parents, who failed to recognise his peculiar disposition. Suffering from neglect and cold treatment on their part, as well as on that of the servants of the household, he was doubly sensitive regarding their kind treatment of his brothers and sisters, which was in marked contrast with that accorded to him. This awakened, at an early age, the resistant forces of a stern and unconquerable spirit, which the events of future years were to further develop in all its power.

It is related of him, that, at the early age of six years, he began to resent the injustice with which he was treated. Not being allowed to sit at the table with the other members of the family, and to share their food, he on one occasion sprang from his stool, and, jumping upon the table, demanded that he be accorded the same privileges as his brothers and sisters. To his mother's threat of a whipping, he replied by overturning the table with all its furniture and food. At another time, when a number of guests were present, among whom was a Converse from a neighbouring convent who was famed for her learning and knowledge of palmistry, Bertrand was not allowed to come to the table, but was seated upon the floor. Many unkind references were made to him by members of the family. The Converse, feeling sorry for him, called him to her and spoke to him kindly. He replied sternly, threatening to strike her with a stick which he held, apparently thinking that she, too, designed making

sport of him. She, however, persisted in calling him to her, and assured him that she intended kindness only. She then asked him to show her his hand, in order that she might examine it and read upon it what fortune and honour lay before him. He replied angrily, "I will believe that I shall have neither joy nor honour: for my father and mother harshly repel me, and I could never tell why." *

The Converse then turned to his mother and rebuked her for her unkindness, saying †, "Dame, is not this your son?" "He is," replied the mother, "but my lord does not love him; I am sorry that he was ever born; he is rude and ungracious, and he will never be otherwise. He fights, he is fierce, and he troubles the children. If anyone says what he does not like, he is angry. He has neither sense nor manners, would to God he were dead!" When Bertrand heard this, he rose and said, "Dame, you are wrong that you desire my death: wish that I may live. When I shall have grown older, I shall have a horse which will cost you dear, but you shall be well paid for it; great honour will come to you by me, and to all my friends, whoever they may be."

The Converse then said to her, "Dame, take my opinion; I assure you that this child, of whom you think so unkindly, will be fortunate and achieve great honour. He will have no equal, and become the most esteemed of the sons of France."

* Cuvelhier, Part I., v., 105.

† "Dame dit la converse, or ne me celez jà;
N'est mie votre filz, cilz enfès par de là."
—Cuvelhier, vv. 113–135.

This prediction had the force of a revelation to his parents, and from that time he stood before them in a new light; but upon Bertrand her words made the deepest impression. Unaccustomed to kindness and attention, his whole manner changed, and after this event his parents regarded him with a kindlier feeling.

His early education was limited. At this period few, excepting the ecclesiastical orders, considered learning of any importance. Although his father was the possessor of landed estates, he had but a slight appreciation of the importance of acquiring the accessible knowledge of that time. In the rude society of Brittany little opportunity was afforded for the development of the æsthetic nature. It is not strange, therefore, that Bertrand should have received but a limited education. Uninfluenced by the softening tendencies of the world of art, and with mental activities uncontrolled by those agencies which could turn them into proper channels, his iron will was undisciplined by the conditions most essential to teach him the important lesson of self-control.

His knowledge was gained from men, and not from books, which were limited almost entirely to the precincts of the cloister; and what he gathered of knowledge was almost wholly confined to the incidents and customs of the times.

He early manifested a fondness and an unusual capacity for athletic sports.

At the age of nine years he was accustomed to gather the children of his father's tenantry and conduct mimic battles and contests. In these he always took an active part, and enjoyed leading and en-

couraging the fierceness of the struggle, shouting "Guesclin!" as his battle-cry.

He manifested here another of his characteristic qualities, that of generosity; since, after these youthful tournaments, he would invite his companions to the neighbouring tavern, and spend all his pocket money in their entertainment.* His mother was sorely troubled by the tattered clothing and scratched face of her son, and his father attempted to prevent the occurrence of these rude sports by forbidding his tenants to allow their children to join in them. But Bertrand was not to be conquered by prohibition. When his companions refused to join in the contests which he planned, he attacked them. This led to a complaint by the parents of the children, and he was placed by his father as a prisoner in a room in the castle. Here he was confined for four months.

This prolonged confinement had little effect in taming his active spirit, for, wearying of the enforced quiet, he overpowered the maid who brought him his meals, and, taking the keys from her, locked her in the room. He escaped to the castle of an uncle living at Rennes, who received him kindly.

He had now reached the age of sixteen years. His aunt was less lenient toward his faults than was his uncle. She was desirous that Bertrand should share her religious inclinations. Though he accompanied his relatives to church, he found many opportunities, unbeknown to them, to leave the services on Sunday, and to join in the rude sports and contests of the peasantry, for which athletic exercises he had an increasing fondness.

* Cuvelhier, Part I., v. 215 *et seq.*

On one Sunday, during the sermon, eluding the vigilance of his aunt and leaving the church, he sought the spot where the sports were in progress. As soon as his companions saw him, they called to him that the champion of all the wrestlers desired a bout with him. On the promise that they would not inform his aunt, he entered the ring, and after a struggle succeeded in throwing his antagonist. In falling upon him, he cut one of his knees upon a flint so severely, that he was obliged to have the wound dressed by a surgeon, and to be conveyed on a litter to his uncle's home. His aunt forgave him this escapade, on condition that he would renounce these vulgar contests and confine his efforts to jousts and tournaments. He spent a year in the family of his uncle, at the end of which time his father had forgiven his failings and received him again into the circle of his own home. Here, by his spontaneous good nature and generous liberality, he rapidly gained favour with his father and with all with whom he came in contact.

An incident which had a marked influence upon his career occurred in 1337,* when he was in his eighteenth year. The marriage of Jeanne la Boiteuse, daughter of the Duc de Bretagne, Comtesse de Penthièvre, with Charles, son of the Comte de Blois, led to festivities in many parts of Brittany in honour of the event. One of these gatherings occurred at Rennes. Among its important features was a tournament by a number of the assembled chevaliers and squires. At the time of these jousts, Bertrand was at Rennes with his uncle. He at-

* Luce, *Vie de Bertrand du Guesclin*, p. 25.

tended the fête, mounted upon one of the work horses belonging to his father. He was greatly depressed by being obliged to appear in such poor form. In passing along the streets, he heard the remarks of bystanders, which were far from complimentary. "How," said one, "is this the son of a chevalier? he is mounted upon a miller's horse!" Another exclaimed, "One would take him to be a herdsman, he is better fitted to drive a team than to take part in a tournament! His place is the kitchen, he is an eater of soup." "Pshaw!" said a third, "I have heard such things of him, that, if our Duke knew them, he would make him Chief Pantler of Brittany!"

On arriving at the lists, which were erected in the market-place, he saw the ladies richly dressed, occupying the seats and exchanging smiles of recognition and encouragement with the chevaliers and squires, who were clad in shining armour and mounted upon spirited war-horses. "Alas!" he exclaimed, "I am so ill-favoured that no lady would love me, or permit me to wear her colours. If I but had a good horse! Were I only armed as a gentleman should be, I would attack the best mounted and would overthrow them, or I would perish in the attempt! My father has done me a great wrong; he has not given me the position which belongs to the son of a chevalier. But, if I am destined to outlive him, I swear that I will acquire more glory than Roland, Arthur, and Gavain, even if I be compelled to spend my entire inheritance to achieve it!"

Meanwhile, the sound of the trumpets announcing the commencement of the tournament, the prancing

of the steeds, the flashing of the shields, and the waving of the ladies' scarfs all served to make him more dissatisfied with his miserable equipment.

The barriers were opened, and the champions dashed into the arena. Robert du Guesclin, his father, took part in these jousts. But Bertrand's attention was wholly absorbed in watching the movements of one person; it was one of his cousins, of the same age as himself.* He was clad in a fine suit of armour, and mounted upon a powerful war-horse. After he had run the number of courses fixed by the rules of the tournament, Bertrand went to him and begged him to lend him his armour and his horse. "Indeed, Cousin Bertrand," he replied, "I will do so with pleasure, and will arm you myself." Bertrand was delighted, and, entering the lists, was immediately challenged by a chevalier whose gage he accepted. At the first onset, his lance was so well aimed that, striking the visor of his adversary, he sent his helmet flying to a distance, and both horse and rider were thrown to the ground, the former dead, and the latter in a condition of unconsciousness. "Behold a valiant Squire!" exclaimed the heralds. But they could not give his name as he kept his visor down.†

When the discomfited chevalier regained consciousness he demanded the name of his conqueror. "Ye gods!" he exclaimed, "by whom was I at-

* Probably Olivier de Mauny, who was his companion in arms from the commencement to the end of his career.—*Buchon*, p. 27.

† During the period in which chivalry was at its height, a squire could not presume to joust with a knight, but only with a squire; later, and at the period of this sketch, these rules had been relaxed.

tacked? Never was a lance better aimed. Go and demand of this squire his name and family!" His attendant soon returned with this reply: "Sire, you will learn the name of this squire when he is unhelmeted by you or another, and then only will you know it." "Bring me another horse. I will not rest until I learn by whom I have been overthrown; he is a gentleman and of noble blood," he replied.

The skilful and fortunate thrust of the young squire, and the mystery which surrounded him, provoked the bravest of the champions to combat with him; but they met with no better success than the first, for Bertrand put them, one after another, *hors de combat*. It now came the turn of Robert du Guesclin, who had, thus far, held the field against all comers. On riding to meet him, Bertrand recognised the arms upon his shield as those of his father, and, lowering the point of his lance courteously, he passed him and returned to his position.

He was at once challenged by another chevalier, who thought his action had been prompted by fear. Attacking him, Bertrand, with a well-directed thrust of his lance, sent his helmet to a distance of ten paces, and again the heralds cried, "Victory for the adventurous new-comer!"

Bertrand ran fifteen courses successfully when, in the sixteenth, he was unhelmeted by a Norman chevalier of great skill, and was recognised by his friends. The prize of valour was awarded to him, and he returned from the festival in triumph. The delight of his father was great, and he immediately promised him all he might ask of horses and of money:

His mother, also, joined in the rejoicing, and, from that time, his position was entirely changed.*

It was the opening event of a memorable career. To appreciate the importance of the occurrences in which he was to play so important a part, a brief consideration of the affairs of Brittany at this period is essential.

* " Je vous donrai chevaulx du tout à vo baillie,
De l'or et de l'argeut, ne vous en faudrait mie,
Pour aler tout pas tout acquerre villandie,
Si ma terre endevoit lonc temp estree engagie,
Puis qu' au jour d'un m'avez fait telle courtoisie."
—Cuvelhier, v. 520.

CHAPTER II.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

1320–1381.

Brittany in the fourteenth century—Conditions of society—Houses and villages—Furniture, food, and customs—Faults of society—Chivalry represented its best characteristics—Origin and character of chivalry—The Chevalier—The orders of Chivalry—What it represented—What it accomplished—Military organization in the fourteenth century—The great battles of the century—The armour of the period—Military tactics—Strategy almost unknown—The influence of gunpowder.

BRITTANY, in its physical formation, has a character peculiarly its own. In the early part of the fourteenth century, the Breton race exhibited qualities as stern and hardy as the land which it inhabited.

The Bretons were strong in their attachment to their feudal sovereign. Warm and imaginative in temperament, extreme in good as well as in evil, capable of everything, except restraint; never half-loving or hating, and warlike by nature, they were credulous of the miraculous and attracted by pomp and display.

French Brittany was composed of the dioceses of Rennes, Nantes, Dol, Saint Malo, Saint Brieuc, and the eastern part of the diocese of Treguier: these were generally favourable to the cause of Jeanne de Penthièvre and Charles de Blois. Breton proper, that is, the diocese of Saint Pol de Leon, Quimper, and the eastern part of the diocese of Vannes, was devoted to the cause of John de Montfort.

The partisans of each cause, during a quarter of a century of struggle, exhibited the same tenacity of purpose and the same unflagging devotion to the representatives of the cause which they had espoused.

If we could place ourselves in the rural districts of Brittany or France, at the end of the reign of Philippe de Valois, we should be impressed by the great number of little villages which existed. But few isolated houses were to be seen. The buildings were uniformly grouped into small hamlets. The cottages or huts, of which these were composed, were rudely built. Their walls were most frequently constructed of clay or mud plaster, but sometimes of lath or poles, with hay or straw filling the interstices. Masonry was the exception.

While slate or gay-coloured tiles formed the roofs of the principal dwellings of the cities, the cabins and cottages of the peasantry were generally roofed with thatch; sometimes, in the vicinity of the forests, with shingles. Slate roofs were most common in certain parts of Brittany, especially in Anjou, where the great slate quarries still furnish abundant material for similar purposes. Nearly all houses consisted of a ground floor only; a few, especially

the taverns, had a second story and were more pretentious in their construction and appointments.

The doors of the cottages were closed by wooden bolts or pins, and in such manner that one might easily push them back with a knife. Light for the interior was obtained through the open door, which, in order to facilitate this, was divided in the centre, the upper half being usually kept open while the lower half was closed. There were very few windows, and, when such existed, they were very narrow. These were closed by means of a shutter, which it was necessary to open in order to admit light. Although the manufacture of glass had commenced at this time, the product was thick, opaque, and filled with air-bubbles and irregularities, and was too expensive for use by the peasantry. In some of the windows of the houses of the better class the frames were filled with waxed linen or parchment.

The furniture of the household was simple. In the living-rooms, two or three small stoves, one or two tables, beds of feathers or straw, an iron shovel, a gridiron, and a lantern were usually to be seen. In addition to these, the axe or hatchet, copper jugs for carrying milk, gourds for water, a spinning-wheel, candlesticks of copper, or more frequently of brass or of wood, and irons or fire-dogs of iron, and panniers for the back of the horse, for use upon the journey or the trip to market, were common.

The table furniture consisted of cups and plates of pewter and glass. Special drinking-cups, brightly coloured, were numerous. Silver cups and spoons

were more frequently found than among the same class at the present time.*

Bed and table linen also were in common use. The cellar contained two or three casks for wine, and simple tubs and pails. The farm utensils consisted of an iron-shared plough, others of wood, mattocks for breaking up soil, and panniers for grain and vegetables. These, and a few smaller articles of slight value, made up the complement.

Wages were fair in amount. The purchasing power of money at that period was proportionately as great as at any time since.

Food was abundant and of good quality. Wheat bread, though not so common as rye, was everywhere to be had. Pork and bacon were largely used as food. Beverages, in the form of wine, were abundant. In some portions of Normandy cider was generally drunk, but the cheapness and abundance of wine rendered its consumption very large.

All occasions of ceremony, such as weddings, baptisms, and saints' days, were celebrated by banquets, which were quite general in character. That which gave them this feature was the custom requiring each comer to bring his contribution. One person was designated as *governor of the feast*, and it was his duty to collect the donations brought by the guests.

Besides the religious or family fêtes, there were others which belonged to certain seasons of the year. Some of these are exceedingly primitive and ancient. In Vermandois, for example, during the night of the first day of May, green branches were

* Luce, *Hist. de Bert. du Guesclin*, p. 60.

placed at the doors of the homes of the young unmarried girls. On the eve of St. John's Day, in the neighbourhood of Sens, parents having very young babies displayed them near their homes, surrounded with green branches, and distributed little tarts to the persons who came to see them.*

These fêtes have the same antiquity as the folk-lore and folk-songs. Each country, and each village even, has its special fêtes. It is a notable fact that dancing forms a prominent feature in all of them. In each village a special place was set apart for these fêtes, and in some the cemetery or its vicinity was the chosen locality.

In each manor district there was a physician or surgeon. The surgeons were examined and licensed by a Board of the Masters of Surgery of Paris. They displayed as a sign a small banner hung from a window of their house. The physicians were sometimes given the degree of Master of Arts and of Medicine. Doctors in medicine held the same relative position or rank as other doctors of degree, and, like the clergy, very generally took vows of celibacy. This restriction was removed about the middle of the fourteenth century by the permission to marry, granted by the Cardinal d'Estonteville.†

Beside the manor physician, there was in nearly every village the "barber surgeon," whose low fees brought him the larger part of the patronage of the peasantry.

The clothing of the period was extravagant, especially among the upper classes. Luxury found its

* *Arch. Natle. Manuscripts*, JJ, 96, No. 95.

† Etienne Pasquier, *Recherches de la France*, iii., chap. xxix.

expression in the amount of fur trimming which appeared upon all articles of personal clothing or decoration. Its character varied with the wealth and position of the wearer. From the most expensive and rare fur to the skin of the hare, all grades were employed. Decoration of articles of clothing with ornaments of gold and silver was very common. The fourteenth century has been styled *the century of linen.* This is due to the fact that the *chemise*, or shirt of linen, came into general use during this period.

It was the successor of the woollen undergarment known as the *chainse*, which was generally worn in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. During the earlier years of the same century, the manufacture and consequent use of letter-paper became general, and was due in no small degree to the increased use of linen. Parchment and paper of eastern manufacture were employed for record, but commanded a price too high for ordinary purposes. Paper made of linen rags thus became available for common use.

We cannot, even in the briefest review of the conditions of any period, no matter what may have been its virtues and successes, close our eyes to its faults and its vices. While the fourteenth century presents much that is attractive in the brilliancy of its chivalry, and in advances made over the conditions of preceding centuries, it is darkened by the shadow of its barbarity and the blot of the immorality of its administration of justice. This latter was mainly conducted through two avenues,—seigneurial or lordly justice, and royal justice. The first was that of locality, and accompanied the title of the soil.

From this, appeal to the second, or royal justice, was a resource of the condemned. Both were equally cruel. Arrests upon frivolous or personal grounds were common, and the most brutal punishments were resorted to, among which were mutilation, and branding with the red-hot iron. Torture, though forbidden by royal ordinance, was constantly used in obtaining evidence. The royal pardon could be obtained for the foulest crimes, on the ground of faithful service to the King in war.

Yet, though so dark a picture is drawn of important institutions of the period, there were those among the clergy, the educated laity, and the nobility, who were superior to the prevailing spirit of the times, and left, as monuments of their more elevated character, educational institutions founded for the benefit of the people, with provisions for care of the sick and injured among their followers. Nearly every hamlet had its aid association. And thus, through the dark shadows which inhumanity and force cast over many of the most important events of this period, we catch occasional and reassuring glimpses of the existence of the higher virtues.

In no manner can we so fully appreciate this latter fact as in a review of the institution of chivalry, among whose chevaliers and squires we shall find the impersonation of all that was best and noblest, and in whose institutions, in spite of conspicuous failures on the part of some of its representatives, was maintained a spirit of justice which links the honour and integrity of that disturbed era with that of the more peaceful present. Different ideals and standards exist in the two periods of history; but that which

gave rise to and continued the institution of chivalry in that period, is the same mental trait which, under changed conditions, has manifested itself in the more elevated altruism of the present day.

Some uncertainty as to the origin of chivalry has existed. This has arisen from an imperfect conception of what it represents. There are those who claim to see, in the chivalry of the Romans, the type of the chivalry of the Middle Ages. It is not necessary to consider these claims. The chivalry of the Middle Ages presents no points in common with that, so called, of the Romans. Chivalry, to be fully comprehended, should be considered in its political relations. Before the middle of the eleventh century nothing appears to mark its existence. Yet it was not a sudden creation, it was a gradual growth. Its origin must be determined by its harmony with existing conditions and laws.

According to Sainte Palaye, three opinions of the origin of chivalry are to be considered *:—

1. "Chivalry, as the Feudal System, as intimately connected with the conquest of the Gauls, since its customs and spirit seem to be in accord with those of the nations of the North.

2. "Chivalry, as born in the reign of Charlemagne; all the traditions of the Middle Ages seeming to attest this.

3. "That the Scandinavians introduced chivalry into the customs of the French people, since the Edda and the sublime discourses of Odin contain a large number of precepts which closely conform to those followed by the knights chevaliers."

* Sainte Palaye, *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, vol. i., p. xvii.

That neither of these opinions is correct seems to be the natural deduction. After a careful study of the character and laws of chivalry, one almost instinctively concludes that chivalry was simply a free association, of which the ultimate object was the defence of the feeble, and that the laws of this association were for a long time sanctioned by usage before being adopted as feudal laws.

It owed its existence to causes which are not fully demonstrable at the present time. The more one studies the subject, the more he is persuaded that chivalry originated, and reached its highest point of development, upon the soil of France. It intrenched itself in the customs and laws of the state, as it depended upon the courage and honour of the leaders of the people. It became the law of the state because it met all the conditions of convenience and necessity which gave to institutions a legal character.* In its essential features it was a ceremonial. While not based upon any special religious creed, it bore in some respects a strong resemblance to the ecclesiastical profession. It is a parallel resemblance only in respect to its similarity of applications and qualifications, its privileged and specified vestments, its corresponding or equivalent privileges, and its positive duties and obligations.

The qualities of the chevalier, as demanded by the laws of chivalry, well expressed its character. Sainte Palaye gives these as follows: "strength, endurance, gentility, gentleness, courtesy, wealth, and influence." Aside from the defence of the true faith, so called, the chevalier was the special de-

* Sainte Palaye, *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, vol. i., p. xxi.

fender of the widow, the orphan, and the oppressed or the wronged. Women, especially, had claims for protection. Without arms to maintain her possessions, it was her privilege to call upon the individual chevalier to become her special protector. No obligation was more binding than fidelity to his word, and no greater disgrace could come upon the chevalier than the breaking of his parole.

To secure hardihood, skill in the use of arms, and readiness for duty, constant exercise and practice were essential. To this end mock battles, known as *jousts*, were established. This was undoubtedly the origin of the tournament; but it developed into a much more significant and extensive ceremony. From a military exercise, it became a solemn occasion, where the magnificence and the fulness of chivalry were displayed. While chivalry was in one sense "a school of prowess," it was in another the field of honour and glory, and developed so deep a respect for courage and integrity, that it became the embodiment of most that was noblest and best in the period during which it was at the height of splendour. It is true that it greatly developed the martial spirit, but, founded upon a high standard of personal honour, it became a fit opponent to the brutal spirit which is based upon the belief, so prevalent at that time, that "might makes right."

The titles of "Sire" and "Monsieur" were originally given to chevaliers, and were titles of distinction. To the ladies, who were the special objects of devotion on the part of the chevalier, were given the designation of "Dame" or "Ma-

dame." Those of the squires were called "Mademoiselle." *

The distinctions between the orders of chivalry were very sharply drawn. A knight could fight with a knight only, and a squire with a squire only. During the height of chivalry these laws were most rigidly observed. Previous to the reign of John II. of France, 1350 to 1364, chivalry had reached its meridian, but may be said to have commenced a decline during his reign, which continued through those of the three Charleses who followed him; though it was brilliantly represented by Du Guesclin, Louis de Sancerre, and hosts of others.

The various orders or degrees of chivalry were distinctly marked by corresponding differences in dress. The chevalier, in the character of his clothing, his armour, and accoutrements, was brilliant in comparison with the squire, and was correspondingly impressive in his effect upon the people. Few of the rights of the chevalier belonged to the squire. The chevalier was exempted from the payment of taxes. His armour opened all gates to him and insured a free passage. If taken prisoner, his dignity assured him protection, and ordinarily his parole secured his freedom.

Of all the rights which belonged to the chevalier, that of creating new chevaliers was the most important. This was granted, even at the time of his own promotion. In this respect the chevalier shared the power and authority of his sovereign. At festivals and in solemn assemblies the chevaliers had their

* Sainte Palaye, *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, vol. i., pp. 285, 287, notes 7 and 8.

own special tables, and were served by their squires. Monarchs felt that they could not impress their children with too high a respect for an order to which their thrones owed their sturdiest support and their brilliancy; and they declined to be crowned until they had been themselves admitted to the order and received their complete panoply.

If a chevalier was worthy and able to furnish for the state a sufficient number of men-at-arms, he was permitted to add to his simple title of Chevalier, or Chevalier "Bachelor," the more noble title of Chevalier "Banneret." The special distinction of the banneret was the form of banner which he carried upon his lance. It differed from that of the ordinary chevalier in being square instead of a narrow pennon with divided point. To the bannerets high honours were offered in the titles of "Count," "Baron," "Marquis," and "Duke." These titles conferred upon them and their wives a rank and prominence which marked the importance of their services to the state. These honours, which at first were personal, later became hereditary.

While chivalry rendered brilliant the positions of those who sustained it by feats of courage and of arms, as well as by exalted traits of character, it also visited with severe penalties and disgrace those who, by any crime, treachery, or failure to observe its highest requirements, should bring any stain or dishonour upon it.

The slightest faults, if of a disreputable character, excluded the chevalier committing them from the tables of other chevaliers or squires. Should his fault be extreme, he was correspondingly disgraced,

and with a formality of great solemnity. He was led into a public place, where his armour was stripped off, broken and trampled in the dust, the blazon was effaced from his shield, and he was conducted before the door of a church and covered with funereal robes. Here the prayers for the dead were read over him, and he was dismissed from all association with the members of the order, and deprived of all privileges belonging to an honourable person.

While chivalry may have had its weak points, it had many sources of appeal to the highest traits of human character. The brotherhood of chevaliers and squires was a close and devoted one. Personal sacrifice, mutual aid, and unselfishness were prominent traits in this relation. The cause of the weak was an appeal which ever met with a ready response from its chevaliers and squires.

While we so distinctly recognise the advantages of military chivalry, of which traces only now remain, we are not oblivious to the evils and abuses which in some measure counterbalance them, and lead us to inquire into the causes of its decadence. We are not unmindful of the fact that the times in which it flourished covered a period when debauchery, cruelty, and violence were common, and that not infrequently these vices were encountered in the chevaliers who were among the heroes of the time. It seems difficult to harmonise these facts, and to adopt the conclusion that these two opposite conditions could exist coincidently; but such was in reality the case.

Nothing was so powerful in establishing a spirit

of emulation, in the attainment of discipline and integrity, in the soldiers of the time, as the laws of chivalry; and it is a matter of interest, that, in a period so corrupt, such examples of unflinching faith and honour should have been developed by it. The truth which underlies this apparent paradox is, that the individual man is comparatively unimportant, and that there is a wide difference between a theory and its practice. In the most orderly communities it is the minority who comply with every law, and consequently abuses constantly creep in. These abuses generally must be attributed to men, and not to the professions which they adopt, and which have been established by society for its safe conduct.

While chivalry developed individual skill and prowess, it did little or nothing toward establishing an art of warfare. The gathering of large numbers of chevaliers and their followers into armies for various purposes, was not uncommon, and collisions or battles between such bodies of soldiers were frequent, but no system which could merit the name of an art or a science is apparent.

The right of the feudal lord to demand the service of his vassals in war, or for the protection of his own possessions, enabled the princes to assemble armies of soldiery of considerable proportions.

There being no unifying power which could hold together and control these forces, they were unwieldy and unreliable bodies. Insubordination was common in all such combinations; and in an engagement, at any critical moment, disaster might be precipitated by the rash action or sudden withdrawal of some petty baron with his followers.

There was thus, during the eleventh, twelfth, and the greater part of the thirteenth centuries, nothing which could be considered as strategic movement, and no evidence of tactical method, Great battles were rare, and when occurring, they were largely a matter of accidental encounter. It is to be remembered that formal challenges were made and accepted between the leaders of forces to meet in battle upon a future day, and at a place designated; but these battles were dependent for their result upon the comparative numbers and prowess of the opposing forces.

William of Normandy, in his conquest of England, led an army which, though successful, was composed solely of his own vassals. It could not be considered, in any sense, either well organised or well disciplined. It may very properly be viewed as the origin of the armies of invasion and conquest which for between two and three centuries crossed and re-crossed between the British Islands and the continent of Europe.

Out of this earlier feudal organisation, if such it might be called, developed what has been styled the "Communal Militia." It, with bodies of mercenaries, *Soudoyers*, grew into a standing army, to which, under Louis VII. and Philippe Augustus, who followed him, the chevaliers were added. An army, constituted for a campaign, was thus made up of three classes of soldiery. The first comprised the orders of *Bannerets*, *Chevaliers*, and *Squires;* the second, the *men-at-arms;* and the third, a large body of foot-soldiers, *varlets*, who, without officers or discipline, and irregularly armed with pikes and

battle-axes, followed the other troops, and in battle killed the wounded of the enemy, and gathered such spoils as they could.

Philippe le Bel, in his efforts to curb the assumptions of an aristocratic class, jealous of its rights and the prerogatives of its individual members, made a further step toward organisation. By decrees, issued from 1303 to 1306, he established provisions which fixed the age of military service and its obligation to royal demands. His efforts were extended by the two succeeding Philippes until, under Philippe de Valois, the men-at-arms and cross-bowmen were regularly organised and paid. Thus, at the beginning or in the early part of the fourteenth century, while an organisation existed in the army of France, it was imperfect and unsubstantial. The same may be said, to a great degree, regarding the English armies.

The facilities for moving a large force were limited. The commissariat was almost entirely confined to such supplies as could be gathered from the country invaded. Means of transportation were primitive; the roads were difficult and dangerous; and, as the invading force usually plundered and devastated the country, it often destroyed supplies as necessary for its own maintenance as for that of the invaded territory.

In the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, battles were fought mainly by mounted troops. During the latter portion of the thirteenth century the English had begun to appreciate the importance of a properly organised infantry force as an addition to their cavalry. The French, however, still clung

tenaciously to the former custom of relying upon mounted troops and the weapons which they employed; and it was only after defeat followed defeat that they were compelled to acknowledge their error, and organise and establish an infantry, effectively armed, as an essential constituent of their army.

In the early part of the fourteenth century the French infantry consisted of poorly equipped archers, who were so unreliable as to require the support of English, German, or Italian mercenaries, in order to render them a dependence. These mercenaries usually fought well.

The arms and armour of the period deserve consideration in their relation to the movements on the field. The chevalier was protected by a suit of mail, as was also his horse. In its most perfect construction, this armour was proof against the weapons then in use. These were the wooden lance, terminating in a steel point, the sword, the battle-axe, and the dagger. The sword was of different dimensions and patterns, varying from that of the huge two-handed weapon, which required a powerful man to wield it, to the dagger, which was employed in connection with the single-handed sword, or in place of it, when fighting on foot. The battle-axe, like the sword, varied in size, form, and weight, according to the preference or power of the individual combatant. It was, in the hands of a strong and skilful man, a weapon as destructive as the sword.

The squire was provided with weapons and armour similar to those of the chevalier, but of plainer and less expensive construction.

The chevaliers and squires formed the cavalry of

the army, and were the preponderating element of its composition. The infantry comprised two classes of troops,—the archers, who were armed with bows and arrows, or with cross-bows and bolts, and were protected with a metal head-piece and a shirt of mail; and a second class which was armed with a pike, spear, or lance, and protected also with a head-piece, a shirt of mail, and a buckler. This shirt of mail was called a *brigandine*, and consisted of small scales of steel sewed upon a thick shirt of buckram. These latter foot-soldiers were sometimes designated *brigands*.

It has been said that "all the great battles of the fourteenth century present us with striking examples of entire absence of skill in tactics." *

While this is in the main true, we cannot admit that the absence of skill in tactics was "entire." In reality, the earliest evidences of some tactical effort were beginning to appear in the battles fought by the great leaders of this century. Until this time, the selection of a strong position, and awaiting the attack of an opposing force, were rare. Nor was it until this period that the importance of guarding the flanks of an army, or of posting reserve forces to meet possible critical conditions, was appreciated, and only then by a conspicuous few. It is true that no strategic movements were conceived, and that the tactics employed were far from profound; but it must not be forgotten that, previously, reliance for success had been placed entirely upon the preponderance of numbers to crush the opposing party. Crécy, Poitiers, and other decisive fields of the first

* Lacroix, *Military Life of the Middle Ages.*

half of the fourteenth century were won by the English; not by superior bravery or numbers, but by an organisation and discipline superior to that of their antagonists, who were lacking in such discipline and skilful management upon the field.

In campaign, the movements of the armies of the period were virtually little more than a destructive raid. The hostile forces moved independently, and frequently each was in total ignorance of the location of the other's troops. Sometimes passing each other, an accidental collision with some part of the opposing army would decide the locality for or the precipitation of a battle. This appears in such movements as those which immediately preceded Poitiers, where the Black Prince, seeking to avoid a battle with John of France, had turned aside, and the French army passed his own. Each commander was unaware of the position of the other until an accidental meeting of a part of the rear-guard of the French with some of the English forces disclosed to John of France that the army, which he supposed was before him, was really in his rear.

The fortified castle and the chevalier in full armour represent the chief military organisation of the period. The fortress and the walled town were the central features of the existing system of warfare. Occupying important commanding points, these strong castles required long sieges for their reduction and capture. The massiveness of their construction, and their powers of resistance to the comparatively feeble destructive engines in use at the time, rendered it possible for a small body of defenders to hold such fortresses for a long period against the efforts of a strong attacking force.

It has been said that the invention of gunpowder was the most potent of the agencies which led to the decline of chivalry. Its discovery in the thirteenth century, and its use as it developed in the latter part of the fourteenth century, gradually lessened the importance of personal prowess upon the field of battle. But other causes were equally active. During the period which this sketch covers, gunpowder had gained comparatively little importance. The instruments for its employment in warfare were poorly constructed and rarely resorted to. They had not reached a point beyond the rude cannon and *bombard*, so called, which were occasionally used against and for the defence of walls.

These were the conditions in which Du Guesclin commenced and completed his military career. Gifted with a strength and personal prowess rarely equalled, and inspired by a remarkable military genius, he was enabled to organise an army, and control its movements upon the field, taking advantage of every condition and circumstance. This combination, so essential to the soldier, assured his success, and made him one of the great captains of history.

It has been truly said of him, "Common sense, not aphorisms, drawn from the customs of the tournament, guided the campaigns of Du Guesclin. He took the field, not in a spirit of adventure, but in a spirit of business." "He would fight if necessary, but was just as ready to reach his goal by craft as by hard blows." *

* Oman, *The Art of War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 107, 108.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESSION.

1341–1354.

The Duchy of Brittany; political conditions—Struggle for the Succession—John de Montfort a prisoner—The Countess takes the field—Edward III. aids the cause—Robert d'Artois—Execution of the Breton Nobles—Du Guesclin an adherent of Charles de Blois—Adventures near Forgeray—The Battle of Crécy—Truce between France and England—Death of Philippe de Valois—Succession of John II.—Death of Jeanne du Malmains—War of the Partisans—Du Guesclin a partisan—"Battle of the Thirty"—Efforts for peace—The Black Prince invades France—Le Maréchal d'Audrehem—Du Guesclin at Montmuran—He captures the Castle of Forgeray.

THE death of John III., Duc de Bretagne, which occurred April 30, 1341, was the initial cause of a series of events most disastrous for France as well as for Brittany. In returning to his duchy from the siege of Tournay, which was being pressed at that time by Edward III. of England, he was stricken with a fatal illness, and died at Caen, in Normandy, on his homeward journey.

John III. left no children; and the succession to the dukedom, rendered vacant by his death, gave rise to a prolonged and bitter struggle, which cost the

lives of many of the noblest chevaliers of France and Brittany, and resulted in untold misery for the people of the unfortunate duchy.

Arthur II. of Brittany, the father of John III., had been twice married. By his first marriage he had two sons, John and Guy; and by the second, one son, John, Comte de Montfort. Guy de Bretagne married Jeanne d'Avengour. Of this marriage the offspring was a daughter, who married Charles de Chatillon,* the youngest son of Guy, Comte de Blois, and Margaret de Valois, sister of Philippe VI. of France.

Upon the death of John III., the succession was claimed by Charles de Blois in behalf of his wife, Jeanne, and also by John de Montfort as being nearest of kin. It is evident that the deceased Duke of Brittany had anticipated the claims of his half-brother, John de Montfort, and had sought, by the alliance which was secured in the marriage of his niece with Charles de Blois, to meet and forestall them.

John de Montfort immediately assumed the right of succession and speedily overran the province of Brittany with his forces, and, crossing to England, laid his claim before Edward III., urging him to aid him in maintaining his pretensions, and promising to acknowledge allegiance to him as his sovereign, in return for such aid as he should receive from him. Edward readily accepted the proposition, and prom-

* John III. desired to have this daughter succeed him, and wished to marry her to one of her cousins of the houses of Laval or Rohan, but feared the jealousy which would arise in consequence. He chose the family of Chatillon, one of the most illustrious of Europe. The family became extinct in 1764.

ised to render armed assistance in maintaining his possessions and in furthering his claims in Brittany. Charles de Blois had, in the meantime, laid his cause before Philippe VI. of France, who was disposed to espouse it. After consultation with the leading lords of France, he summoned John de Montfort and Charles de Blois to appear before a council of the Peers of France, to whom their respective claims should be submitted. Before this parliament, both John de Montfort and Charles de Blois were heard, and the legal claims of each were fully presented. The decision of the council was unfavourable to the cause of De Montfort, and in favour of Charles de Blois.

The claims of the latter were sustained on the ground that the children of a brother should succeed against the claim of an uncle; that the right of succession descended to the eldest, and, in the event of his death without issue, that all fiefs and rights were transferred to the next younger brother; that the children of the eldest, male or female, succeeded to the rights of their parents against an uncle. This decree was rendered on the 7th of September, 1341, at Conflans.*

John de Montfort refused to accept this decision, and continued to seize castles and strongholds in those portions of Brittany which had been favourable to the cause of his rival, Charles de Blois. The latter, with the aid of the Duc de Normandie and other nobles, immediately entered upon a campaign designed to gain possession of the province of Brittany by the recapture of such portions of territory

* *Actes de Bretagne*, vol. i., col. 1415.

and such strongholds as John de Montfort had already taken, as well as to seize and hold important places which were loyal to the Comte de Montfort. One of the first points of attack was the strong fortress of Chateauceau, situated upon the banks of the Loire. The position and strength of this castle caused it to be considered the gate of entrance to Brittany, upon that side of its territory. After a severely contested siege, the fortress was compelled to surrender to the forces of Charles de Blois. Pushing rapidly onward, he invested and attacked the town of Quonquefon, not far distant from Nantes, which was his objective point. It was quickly taken, pillaged, and burned, and the investment of Nantes immediately followed. This was so sturdily pressed, that the burghers of the city, fearing its ultimate capture and pillage, entered into negotiations with the Duc de Normandie for its surrender. This was accomplished; and the forces of Charles de Blois entered the city and took possession of it, making the Comte de Montfort prisoner.* From Nantes he was sent to Paris, and confined in the tower of the Louvre. While the capture and imprisonment of John de Montfort was a severe blow to his cause, it did little more than retard the activity of operations in his behalf. Jeanne de Montfort, his wife, immediately took the field in his stead.

The nobles and knights, who had followed her husband, rallied around the Comtesse, who displayed rare traits of military skill and bravery. Charles de Blois was, however, very active and persistent, and immediately besieged the city of Rennes,

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part I., chap. 157, Buchon ed.

PHILIPPE VI. (DE VALOIS)

which he captured after a brave though short resistance. Without delay, he invested the Castle of Hennebon, into which the Comtesse de Montfort had retreated, and pushed the siege with energy. The Comtesse used every effort to encourage her forces to sustain the siege and await the arrival of aid from England, which had been promised by Edward III. So vigorously was the siege pressed, that the fortress was upon the point of negotiations for surrender when the hoped-for aid arrived, and the English auxiliaries, under the leadership of Sir Amauri de Clisson, uniting their forces with those of the defenders, raised the siege.

In the latter part of 1342 a temporary cessation of hostilities gave the Comtesse de Montfort opportunity to cross to England to secure more substantial aid from Edward III. She was kindly received by the King of England, who had just successfully repelled an invasion of his territories by the Scots. He readily promised to send to her aid a force of four thousand men-at-arms and six thousand archers. These he placed under the command of Lord Robert d'Artois, who, though allied by blood to the noblest families of France, had suffered disgrace from his intrigues against the crown of Philippe de Valois, his brother-in-law. Able and resourceful, adroit and plausible, he had obtained a strong influence over Edward III.; and to this influence, more than to any other cause, may be attributed his decision to urge and strive to sustain his flimsy claim to the crown of France, which resulted in the sanguinary struggle which continued through his own and the reigns of the next two successors to his throne.

Robert d'Artois was the son of Philippe d'Artois, who died before his children reached mature age. Upon his death, his aunt, Mathilde de Bourgogne, claimed the county in behalf of herself as next of kin. Two of her daughters had married the two sons of Philippe IV. of France, Philippe le Long and Charles le Bel, and this circumstance undoubtedly influenced Philippe of France in granting the fief of Burgundy to Mathilde.

Robert d'Artois took serious affront at this decision, and when Philippe de Valois succeeded to the throne, he renewed his claims. His efforts, which he endeavoured to sustain by fraudulent papers, having failed, he fled in disgrace to Brussels. Later, in March, 1332, his estates were confiscated, and a decree of banishment was entered against him. He took refuge with Edward III. of England, and until the time of his death used every effort to wreak his vengeance upon Philippe de Valois, whom he considered the source of his misfortunes. Through his influence, also, Edward entered into alliances with several of the princes of the Low Countries, and, taking advantage of the Flemish revolt, essayed to invade France on the side of Flanders. These operations were, however, attended with no important result; and Edward, listening to the entreaties of the Comtesse de Hainault, and raising the siege of Tournay, signed a truce for a year with Philippe de Valois.

The application of the Comtesse de Montfort was therefore the more readily listened to, since the civil dissensions of Brittany afforded him a favourable opportunity for pressing his own claims; while an

alliance with one holding ports of entry gave him an easy access to France, whenever he should deem it desirable to enter her territories with an invading army. He was therefore an interested spectator in the events which were passing, and found it for his own advantage to render the Comtesse de Montfort the aid which she desired.

The expedition, after many delays, sailed from Southampton, and was for a time detained by adverse winds. As it finally neared the shores of Brittany, it was met by a fleet of Genoese and Spanish vessels, under the command of Lord Louis of Spain. An engagement resulted, which was terminated by the oncoming of night. Both fleets anchored, with the intention of renewing the conflict on the following day; but, a tempest arising, the vessels were scattered, and the English finally landed near Vannes, in the southern part of Brittany. The English troops, united with the forces of De Montfort, laid waste certain portions of Brittany. Vannes was taken, and Rennes besieged; but these successes were only temporary, Vannes being retaken by the forces of Charles de Blois, and the siege of Rennes being raised.

At the siege of Vannes, Robert d'Artois received a serious and painful wound, from the effects of which he soon died. His death was a severe loss to the cause of De Montfort. Edward III., angered at the failure of his efforts to aid the Comtesse de Montfort, immediately fitted out another expedition, and sailed for the coast of Brittany. Landing near Vannes, he successively besieged that city, Rennes, and Nantes, all of which he failed to capture. He

was soon confronted by the Duc de Normandie, with a well-appointed force largely superior to his own, and was in danger of being captured, together with his forces, when he was relieved by a truce, secured by the intervention of Clement VI., which was concluded at Malaestroit on the 19th day of January, 1343, to continue three years.

The affairs of the Comtesse de Montfort had gained little by the efforts of Edward in her behalf, while he suffered the mortification of the failure of two large and expensive expeditions. The truce, which he had been compelled to sign by the stress of necessity, was very galling to him, and he sought a pretence by which he might escape from its provisions. Nothing of sufficient importance occurred favouring his designs, until the King of France, under suspicion of treason, wantonly caused the execution of Sir Olivier de Clisson and fourteen other Breton lords, without even the formality of a trial.

Accordingly he declared the truce broken by this act, and after some delay sent a force of nine hundred men-at-arms and two thousand archers, under command of Henry, Earl of Derby, with the Earls of Oxford and Pembroke and others, into the province of Guienne, where they landed early in the summer of 1345.

The Earl of Derby, after proceeding to Bordeaux, immediately besieged the fortress and town of Bergerac, on the river Dordogne, which was taken after a spirited resistance.

Pushing his efforts, the Earl of Derby succeeded in taking several important points in Périgord and

Agenois, and late in the season returned to Bordeaux. Learning that the Comte de Lille, commanding the French forces, was besieging Auberoche, he moved suddenly against him, and, surprising his forces, succeeded in defeating him and making him a prisoner. Following this success, he captured the strong castle of La Réole, the town of Angoulême, and other important points, and then returned to Bordeaux for the winter.

During this period, Du Guesclin had attained the age of twenty-three years. It was impossible that a mind as active as his should fail to be deeply impressed with the important events which were transpiring on every side. His family was inclined to favour the cause of Charles de Blois, and to it he also committed himself with all the energy of his nature.* Believing in its legality, he openly espoused it, and began the collection of a force with which to aid it. Having limited resources of his own, he sought means to replenish his purse. Cuvelhier relates,† that, taking from his mother's apartments a casket of jewels and money, he divided the contents among his soldiers. To her reproaches he replied that he "would soon return them an hundred-fold increased." The opportunity soon came.

Riding on the road to the Castle of Forgeray, and having but a single follower on foot, he encountered a knight accompanied by his squire, and followed by an attendant leading a sumpter horse. On accosting him, Du Guesclin learned that the knight was an Englishman. He immediately stated to him that he was a supporter of Charles de Blois. The Eng-

* Cuvelhier, v. 640. † *Idem.*, v. 657.

lish knight, lowering his lance, attacked Du Guesclin, who skilfully avoided him. With one blow of his battle-axe breaking the lance of the knight, he, with a second, struck him from his horse. The squire, riding to the assistance of the knight, attempted to run him through with his lance; but a blow from the terrible battle-axe severed his right arm, and a second struck his horse to the ground, carrying his rider with him. Mounting the horse of the fallen knight, Du Guesclin captured the attendant, who had taken flight with the led-horse and his burden. This proved to be the large ransom of the knight which he was taking to the Castle of Forgeray. With the armour and horses of the knight and squire, it became the property of Du Guesclin, in accordance with the laws of chivalry. This prize enabled him to return the forced loan which he had made from his mother, and furnished him with valuable arms for himself, besides a portion to be divided among his followers.*

Little occurred, beside such conflicts, between the forces of the Comtesse de Montfort and those of Charles de Blois, during the year 1345.

Early in the following year, John, Duc de Normandie, was sent with a large army into Guienne to arrest the progress of the English. Edward III., learning of this movement, mustered a large army, and on the 2d of July sailed from Southampton for Guienne; but adverse winds carried him to the shores of Cornwall. On again setting sail, he decided to enter Normandy, and invade France through that province.

* Cuvelhier, v. 699.

He accordingly landed upon that coast, and prepared to overrun the country. Dividing his army into three portions, he placed the first under command of Sir Geoffroi de Harcourt, a French nobleman, who had been driven from France by the severities of Philippe de Valois; the second he commanded himself, taking with him his young son Edward, called the Black Prince; and the third was placed under the command of the Earl of Warwick.

The country was systematically plundered and laid waste; many important towns, also, were captured and pillaged; and, passing the vicinity of Rouen, he extended his operations to the neighbourhood of Paris. Philippe de Valois collected a large force, amounting to nearly one hundred thousand men, with which to oppose the English invaders. These troops were nearly three times the number of those of Edward, who accordingly began a retreat. Philippe, anxious to meet him, pressed his forces, and came up with them near the river Somme. This the English succeeded in crossing, through information given by the treachery of a French prisoner, at the ford of Blanche Tache, near Abbeyville, and, taking a position near Crécy, prepared to meet the army of Philippe.

The waggons and horses were parked in the rear, near a wood. Dividing his forces into three divisions, he placed the first under command of Edward, the Black Prince, who was directly assisted by Sir John Chandos, the Earl of Warwick, and others. Taking one division under his own command, the third was placed under the Earl of Northumberland.

The division under command of the Black Prince

was placed at the front. Before this were arranged a large body of archers in the form of a harrow, behind whom were placed the men-at-arms. In the rear of this formation was drawn up the division commanded by the Earl of Northumberland, while his own division was held in reserve.* He thus awaited the coming of the French.

The forces of Philippe, though greatly outnumbering those of the English, lacked their discipline and order. Pressing forward without proper formation and control, they became engaged with the English in a confused and disorderly manner. Their excess of numbers only added to their confusion. No organised attempt at discipline on the part of the French was manifested, and they were defeated and routed with great slaughter.

So ended the battle of Crécy, a most disastrous event for France, in which conspicuous instances of personal prowess and bravery were wholly without result, on account of an almost absolute absence of military order and plan.

After the battle of Crécy, Edward III. besieged Calais, which he captured after a protracted resistance. During these events the treaty of Malaestroit had expired, and the active struggle for possession of the province of Brittany had commenced anew. Constant encounters between the forces of the two parties met with nearly equal success for each side. Edward III. had sent from Calais, to the aid of the Comtesse de Montfort, a force of two hundred men-at-arms and four hundred archers, under command of Sir Thomas de Dagge-

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part I., p. 235 *et seq.*

worth and Sir John Hartwell. This force besieged the strong castle of Roche Derrien, upon the coast of Brittany, which, after a brief siege, was surrendered by its governor, through the influence and threats of the large body of English sympathisers in its garrison.

As soon as Charles de Blois heard of the loss of this fortress, he took immediate steps for its recapture. Leaving Nantes, with a force of sixteen hundred men-at-arms and twelve thousand foot-soldiers, he marched to Roche Derrien.

The Comtesse de Montfort immediately sent a force of one thousand men-at-arms and eight thousand foot-soldiers, under Sir Thomas de Daggeworth, to meet him. Attempting a night attack and surprise upon the army of Charles de Blois, Sir Thomas de Daggeworth failed, and was himself wounded and taken prisoner. But half his force was engaged in this encounter: the other half, being reënforced, attacked the army of Charles de Blois early on the following morning, and completely surprised and defeated it. Charles was taken prisoner, and many distinguished Breton nobles were slain. This event occurred on the 20th day of June, 1347. It proved a very severe blow to Charles de Blois. After subjecting him to every indignity, the Comtesse de Montfort caused him to be transferred to London and imprisoned in the Tower. Here he remained for a long period.

The victory of the Comtesse de Montfort was by no means final, as far as the cause of Charles de Blois was concerned; for Jeanne la Boiteuse, his wife, immediately took the field in his behalf, and

proved an active and courageous opponent to the cause of De Montfort.

Some relief was experienced through a truce obtained by the intervention of Clement VI. This was to cover a period of six months from September 28, 1347, but was continued by successive renewals for nearly three years. It was imperfectly kept, especially in Brittany, which was in a condition of more or less general disturbance.

During this interval, Charles de Blois had secured his release by the payment of a considerable sum, and by leaving as prisoners, in his stead, his two sons, Guy and John. During the same period, the great plague swept over Europe, and was especially destructive during the year 1349. Italy, Spain, France, Germany, and the north of Europe, suffered terribly from its ravages.*

An effort was made by the French, during this interval, to regain possession of Calais. Sir Geoffroi de Chargny entered into an agreement with its governor, a Lombard knight, to pay a certain sum for its surrender. By some means Edward III. became informed of these plans, and secretly landed at Calais with a force of three hundred men-at-arms and six hundred archers. At the time appointed for the surrender, the party which was completing the negotiations and the forces of Sir Geoffroi de Chargny were attacked by Edward III., and, after a persistent resistance, were defeated and made prisoners.†

The death of Philippe de Valois, which occurred on the 22d of August, 1350, was an event of the

* Hallam's *Middle Ages*, vol. i., p. 67.

† Froissart, Liv. I., Part I., pp. 277, 278.

deepest import to the destinies of France. A man of hasty and irritable disposition and of an arbitrary will, he was implacable in his hostility. Extravagant in the expenditure of his resources, he was at the same time hard and oppressive in the exaction of taxes and revenue from his people. Among the chapters of the history of France, none are more replete with disaster and misfortune than those which record the events of his reign. Commencing this reign with a struggle over a title, he left at its close, as a legacy to France, a feud with England which continued for a century, and whose effects in hostile feeling continue to the present day.

Philippe de Valois was succeeded by John, his oldest son and Duc de Normandie. The expiration of the truce between France and England led him to make immediate preparations for the defence of his kingdom. Sending a small army toward Calais, he set out for the south of France with the main part of his forces. Visiting Avignon, he marched into Poitou, and besieged St. Jean d'Angley. Edward endeavoured to raise the siege, but failed, and the town was taken by the King of France on the 7th of August, 1351.

In the rapid review of events occurring between the commencement of the truce of Malaestroit and the disaster of Roche Derrien, we find little to explain the part played by Bertrand du Guesclin. It is not remarkable that the deeds of an obscure squire should fail to be recorded at a time when no one could foresee the great career which lay before him. That he was not inactive we may well conclude, and, knowing his early devotion to the cause

of Charles de Blois, we may reasonably conjecture that he may have been present in the unfortunate affair of Roche Derrien.

In the month of June, 1350, Du Guesclin was called to his old home by the death of his mother, Jeanne de Malmains. She was not spared to see the prediction of the Converse fulfilled wholly, that her son Bertrand should become the most noted and honoured of the sons of France; but she had known and rejoiced in his earliest successes, which were the opening events of that career. She died at a time when her native country was harassed by the invader and torn by internal dissensions. The party to which her family had been loyal had suffered defeat, and her death came before the dawning of that brighter day for France which was led in by the courage and military genius of her redoubtable son, Bertrand.

Her will was made a few days before her death, in the month of June, 1350, and in it she appointed as her executors Robert du Guesclin (her husband) Thebaud de Saint Didier, and Hervé de Mauny. She chose as her burial-place the Church of Sens in the bishopric of Rennes. As the oldest son, Bertrand inherited the lands of Sens, in succession from his mother.*

The absence of organised military operations led to an irregular and partisan warfare in Brittany. The oppression and exactions of the English, and their efforts to foment existing differences among the people, served to increase the resentment and

* *Hist. Genealog. de plusieurs Maisons illustrés de Bretagne*, A. Paz, 1620, p. 416.

JEAN II. (LE BON)

hatred which had long existed. The partisans of Charles de Blois were bitter in their dislike of, and their determination to drive out, their English oppressors.

Bertrand du Guesclin shared these sentiments most fully. To a nature such as his, hatred of the English involved active hostility to them by every means in his power. The captivity of the leader of his party, and the treaty of Edward III. with the King of France as well as with Charles de Blois, rendered regular warfare impossible. He was thus compelled to pursue an irregular or partisan strife against the English. It could not be expected that the nobles would be willing to place themselves under the leadership of an humble and obscure squire: his only resource, therefore, was to gather and to maintain, at his own expense, a force from such sources as he might be able.

Those whom he first enrolled were young men, inured to hardship, of approved courage, and acquainted with all the obscure roads, passes, and forests of those sections of the province in which the movements which he contemplated should be executed.

Among them were a large number whom he had known in boyhood, and with whose characters and capacities he was well acquainted. From this sturdy yeomanry he recruited the first of his followers to the number of sixty.

The section which was the theatre of these earlier adventures was the forest of Paimpont, which lay between the diocese of San Malo and that of Vannes. The former was mainly devoted to the

cause of Charles de Blois, and the latter to that of the English.

There occurred, during the existence of these irregular conditions, an event which has been frequently referred to by chroniclers of this period, and which has been described with considerable minuteness by Froissart.* It is known as the "Battle of the Thirty."

Sir Robert Beaumanoir, a Breton noble, and governor of the Castle of Josselin, with a number of chevaliers and squires who were followers of the cause of Charles de Blois, came into the vicinity of the Castle of Ploermel, whose governor was named Brambourg, and who held it for the Comtesse de Montfort. Marching before the barriers of the castle, Sir Robert Beaumanoir endeavoured to draw out the garrison to attack him. This they declined to do. Approaching nearer, he caused the governor to be called, and, with mutual assurance of safety, they entered into a parley. "Brambourg," said Sir Robert Beaumanoir, "have you no men-at-arms or two or three who wish to joust with the lance for the love of their ladies?" To this Brambourg replied that they did not wish to lose their friends in a single joust, "for it is a matter of fortune and too soon past, and one would be blamed for folly rather than gain honour, but I will tell you what we will do, if you please. You may take twenty or thirty of your garrison, and I will take the same number of mine. We will go into a fair field, where no one can interfere with us, and we will command, upon pain of death, the friends of both parties, and

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 293 *et seq.*

JEANNE DE BOULOGNE

WIFE OF JEAN II.

all who may be present, to aid and comfort neither party, and there we will perform such exploits of arms as shall be recounted in hall and palace and other places of the world; and fortune and honour shall rest with those for whom God has destined it." "By my faith!" said Beaumanoir, "I agree. You say well! Take you thirty, and we will bring our thirty also." "I promise it also," said Brambourg, "and whoever shall maintain his cause will obtain more honour than in a single joust."

The agreement was affirmed, and Sunday, four days later, was chosen as the day. In the meantime each selected his thirty, and the sixty prepared for the conflict.* On the appointed day Brambourg and his English companions heard mass, armed themselves, and repaired to the place chosen for the battle. Dismounting, they enjoined upon all present to refrain from aiding the combatants in any way, and awaited the coming of Sir Robert Beaumanoir and the French. They soon arrived and dismounted, facing their opponents. After a brief interval, the signal was given, and each party rushed to the conflict. A fierce hand-to-hand struggle ensued. One of the French combatants was early slain. For a long time the struggle continued without positive advantage to either party, until the contestants, from absolute weariness and breathlessness, were compelled to cease for an interval in order to recover

* Sir Robert Beaumanoir's thirty consisted of nine French and Breton chevaliers and twenty-one Breton squires. Brambourg's thirty contained twenty English only; the remainder were Germans and Bretons. The place of meeting was half-way between the Castles of Josselin and Ploermel, at the *chêne de mi voie* ("the midway oak"). The date was the 27th of March, 1351.—Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne.*

their strength. At this time four of the French and two of the English had fallen.

After a period of rest, in which a draught of wine was taken and their disarranged armour replaced, the first who arose gave the signal, and the struggle recommenced. The weapons used were short and sharp Bordeaux swords, daggers, and battle-axes. "We may well believe that there were brave deeds of arms performed among them on both sides, body to body and hand to hand." But the English were worsted, eight of their number being killed, among whom was Brambourg, their leader. The remainder surrendered as prisoners to Sir Robert Beaumanoir, who, with the survivors of his party, conducted them to the Castle of Josselin, from which they were duly ransomed and released, after their wounds were healed, for not one of the combatants of either party escaped without severe wounds.*

The death of Clement VI., which occurred on December 6, 1352, and the consequent accession of Innocent VI., were events of importance to France. The efforts which Clement had made to secure the establishment of peace between the Kings of England and France were continued by his successor in the papal chair. While they fell short of the end desired, they secured the extension of the existing truce until October of the following year.

It was not easy to conduct negotiations of this character with John of France, who inherited the unfortunate disposition of his father Philippe. Possessing an inconsiderate and hasty nature, to whose impulses he yielded without any effort at self-

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 294.

restraint, he aroused the ill will and resentment of the nobles by his arbitrary and severe acts. Among those whose anger and opposition he provoked, was Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, who, ready to enter into any alliance which might prove of present use or benefit to himself, concluded agreements and alliances with the King of England against John of France.

The unfriendly relations between the King of France and Charles the Bad of Navarre, together with the disturbed condition of the kingdom, led Edward III. to use them as a pretence for assuming open hostilities. He accordingly occupied himself busily in raising an army with which to invade France. His preparations were made upon an extensive scale, since he intended to move in several directions simultaneously. With this purpose he organised one part of his forces under command of Henry, Earl of Derby, recently created Duke of Lancaster, for service in Brittany in aid of the Comtesse de Montfort. A second he placed under the command of his son, the Black Prince, intending this for operations in Gascony. A third he commanded himself, and proposed with it to pursue a campaign in Normandy.

Embarking this force at Southampton, he sailed for the coast of Normandy, intending to land there with the main part of his army; but, baffled by adverse winds, he was compelled to land upon the island of Guernsey. Failing to receive information from Charles the Bad of Navarre, he delayed a second start. Meanwhile Charles the Bad, with his usual duplicity, had made peace with the King of

France, in spite of his alliance with Edward III. As soon as Edward became aware of these conditions, he left the island of Guernsey, and, returning to England, set sail from Dover with his army, and landed at Calais.

After overrunning and plundering the adjacent country of Artois, he besieged the fortress of Blangis, and, while so situated, sent a challenge to the King of France to meet him in battle. To this John made no reply; and Edward, receiving information of an invasion of his kingdom by the Scots, returned to Calais in order to sail for England. The King of France, learning these facts, and having a force much superior to that of the English King, sent a formal challenge to Edward to meet him with any number he might choose. Edward declined the challenge, and returned to his own kingdom, where, while settling its disturbances, he accomplished little of his intention of punishing the Scots, and signally failed to achieve any results of importance by his invasion of France.

During this period Charles de Blois had been endeavouring to raise, in Brittany, the ransom demanded for his release, and, in consequence of his failure to do so, had been compelled to return to England. To enable him to arrange for securing the amount of this ransom, a truce had been concluded with Charles de Blois by Edward III., in which the King of France joined, and which was to extend from March 10, 1353, to August 1st of the same year.

The failure of Charles de Blois to secure his release, and the near approach of the termination of

the truce between the Kings of England and France, rendered the renewal of the struggle imminent.

In view of these events, tending to the opening of hostilities along the frontiers of Normandy and Brittany, John II. appointed, as lieutenant of this section, Sir Arnoul d'Audrehem, Maréchal of France,* who immediately took possession of his new command, and established his headquarters at Pontorson. He was the descendant of an honourable family, but without fortune. In person he was tall, of pleasing manner and commanding presence, and possessed great physical strength and activity.

When the county of Angoulême was given to Charles de Bourbon, then Constable of France, in December, 1350, Sir Arnoul d'Audrehem was its governor. In recognition of his services rendered in this capacity, the Constable appointed him a Maréchal of France in place of Sir Edouard de Beaujeu, who had been killed in a combat at Ardres. In the same year Charles de Bourbon married Marguerite, the oldest daughter of Charles de Blois and Jeanne de Penthièvre.

At Pontorson he was brought into frequent contact with Bertrand du Guesclin. Interested in the same cause, possessing a similar fondness for the excitement and the deeds of the battle-field and of great personal prowess, D'Audrehem soon drew Du Guesclin into association with himself in a manner which was to exert a powerful influence upon his future career.

* The great provinces had their special maréchals, who commanded the troops of that province only. They were subordinate to the maréchals of France.

About the same time, Pierre de Villiers, who had just secured his freedom from imprisonment after his capture by the English at the battle of Mauron, was appointed by John II., through whose aid he had secured the amount of his ransom, captain of Pontorson, with instructions to strengthen its defences. De Villiers quickly recognised the good qualities of Du Guesclin, and conceived a warm friendship for and admiration of him. The friendship of D'Audrehem and De Villiers, both of whom were ardent supporters of the cause of France, undoubtedly influenced Du Guesclin in his later adoption of and devotion to the service of the King of France.

The truce between Edward III. and Charles de Blois, which was extended to enable the latter to visit Brittany in an effort to obtain his ransom, postponed the commencement of hostilities. This interval gave an opportunity for a series of tournaments at Pontorson. In the organisation of these contests, Du Guesclin was active, and gained in them added reputation for skill and prowess. Associated with him was Sir Baudoin d'Annequin, who later became prominent as the commander of the cross-bowmen of the army of France.

The latter months of the truce were occupied by the Maréchal d'Audrehem in preparation for the campaign about to commence. His first active operation was the capture of the English fortress of Landal, which had proved itself a threatening neighbour to Pontorson. From here he pushed on to the vicinity of Becherel, and then returned to Pontorson.

Hostilities were not renewed as early as had been

anticipated, since a new truce was concluded between Edward III. and Charles de Blois, extending to the 2d of February, 1354. The year following, and before its expiration, it was further extended, on the 4th of January, 1354, until the 13th of the following April.

It was during this period that an event occurred which was a notable one in the life of Du Guesclin. On Thursday, the 10th of April, three days before the date of expiration of the truce, the Maréchal d'Audrehem was entertained at the Castle of Montmuran as the guest of the Dame de Tinteniac. Upon learning this fact, Sir Hugh Calverly,* one of the officers of the Anglo-Breton garrison of the neighbouring fortress of Becherel, determined to surprise and capture the maréchal and the chevaliers who were with him. His plan would have succeeded had not Du Guesclin, with his usual sagacity, suspected the possibility of such an effort, and made his plans to frustrate it, and to secure the capture of Sir Hugh Calverly himself.

He accordingly placed thirty archers in ambush upon the sides of the road upon which the English would be compelled to pass. Coming unexpectedly upon these, their progress was arrested by them until Du Guesclin and the Maréchal d'Audrehem, with their followers, could come to the rescue. A fierce encounter resulted. During this contest Sir Elatre de Marès, governor of the fortress at Caen,

* He was born at Calverly in Cheshire, England. He went to France early in his life, and engaged in the wars between the French and English, upon the side of the English. He is said to have died about the year 1388.

admiring the bravery of Du Guesclin, created him a chevalier upon the field of battle.*

Calverly and nearly his entire party were made prisoners, but few escaping to the Castle of Becquerel. After the battle, Du Guesclin assumed the white robe of the chevalier at the chapel of the Castle of Montmuran. It is perhaps in memory of the evening of this strife, and of the religious ceremony of his promotion, that he adopted his famous battle-cry, *Notre Dame, Guesclin!* which soon became a terror to the English.†

Soon after this event, learning that Robert Brambourg, ‡ governor of the Castle of Forgeray, had taken the greater part of his garrison upon an expedition to surprise a detachment of the forces of Charles de Blois, he determined to capture the fortress by means of a stratagem.§

Having but sixty men with him, he stationed one-half in a wood near the castle. With the remaining thirty, having their armour covered with the clothing of wood-cutters, and bearing bundles of wood upon their shoulders, he presented himself before the barriers of the castle. The garrison had made demands upon the neighbouring peasants for a supply of wood, which had come to the knowledge of Du Guesclin, and this had suggested this ruse.

The warders, supposing that the wood-cutters

* Luce, *Hist. de Bert. du Guesclin*, p. 127.

† *Idem.*, p. 129.

‡ Cuvelhier states that Robert "Bramborc," the captain of Forgeray, was killed in attempting to retake the castle, but the Breton historians contradict this. He took part in the Battle of the Thirty, in which he was killed. The Breton historians call him *Bembro*.

§ Cuvelhier, Part I., v. 881.

had come in response to their demands, were taken off their guard, and opened the gates of the castle to them. As soon as Du Guesclin and his men had passed within the gate, he threw down his burden, and his followers did the same. The bundles were so placed that the gates could not be closed. Casting off his disguise, he drew his sword, shouting his battle-cry of "*Guesclin!* forward, my friends, forward!" To the English he cried, "Sons of Evil, here is the wood, for which you will pay dear; it is to warm your bath, but it is with your blood that I will fill the tub." He was immediately attacked by the garrison; but the remainder of his followers, hastening to his aid from the adjoining forest, enabled him to maintain his position. The conflict was severe, and as the two parties were nearly the same in numbers, was obstinately contested. The situation of Du Guesclin and his force was becoming somewhat critical, when one of his men announced the approach of a body of horsemen. To the newcomers, the outposts of Du Guesclin shouted, "If you are not for Charles de Blois, if you are English, fly! for, were you double your number, you will all be slain, for Bertrand du Guesclin, and five hundred French with him are here confessing the English." "By the blessed Virgin, we are friends!" they replied.

The arrival of aid was timely, for the party of Du Guesclin was stoutly opposed. With his armour broken, wounded in the forehead, and blinded by his own blood, he was fighting desperately with his broken battle-axe and his fists. He reluctantly ceased the struggle on the surrender of the garrison,

the gates were closed by the victors, and they proceeded to secure rest and refreshment after the struggle.

Du Guesclin was not to remain long in the castle of which he was made governor. Leaving a sufficient garrison to protect it, he joined a number of Breton lords in a visit to England, in an effort to secure the ransom and release of Charles de Blois. This mission was without result of importance, and he returned to Brittany.

CHAPTER IV.

ENGLISH INVASION OF FRANCE.

1354–1357.

The battle of Poitiers—Release of Charles de Blois—The siege of Rennes—Du Guesclin and Sir Thomas Canterbury—Combat with Sir William Brambourg—The affair with Troussel.

THE French, after their defeat in the sanguinary battle of Mauron, on the 14th of August, 1352, had remained upon the defensive, no extensive military movements having been undertaken. This was especially the case in Brittany, where active efforts to secure the release of Charles de Blois were in progress.

On the conclusion of the negotiations for his return for the purpose of raising the amount of his ransom in Brittany, a general treaty had been concluded between the Kings of England and France, and also a special treaty between the partisans of Charles de Blois and those of De Montfort, extending from the 11th of November, 1354, to the 24th of June, 1355.

This treaty was badly observed in the duchy, and constant collisions occurred between small bodies of the partisans of both sides.

On his return from England, Du Guesclin was informed that marauding parties from the English garrison of Becquerel had taken the Château de la Roche aux Anes, and had made frequent incursions into the low country about Saint Malo, and had pillaged other villages of that section. He accordingly summoned a number of the neighbouring chevaliers and squires, among whom were his cousins Olivier and Eon de Mauny, and took the field. He was at that time in command of the garrison of Chateauneuf de la None, near Dinan. Joining their forces, they sought opportunity to meet the marauding parties. These they soon found and attacked, and routed a body of English under command of Robert Richer and Jannequin Toigne, both of whom were captured and put to ransom.

Upon the expiration of the treaty, on the 24th of June, 1355, hostilities recommenced between Edward III. and John of France. During October and November, Edward pushed an expedition into Artois, and the Black Prince at the same time invaded the province of Languedoc in a destructive campaign. With an army of one thousand men-at-arms and eleven thousand archers from England, and five hundred lances and three thousand light armed troops from Guienne, he conducted an expedition for the destruction of property and the collection of booty. No persistent attempts to take fortified points were made. The rich and almost defenceless country through which he passed was plundered and laid waste. An effort to take the strong towns of Toulouse and Narbonne failed, and, after a campaign in which an immense booty was collected, he re-

turned in safety into Guienne with his spoils, having successfully evaded the tardy efforts of the Comte d'Armagnac and Lord James de Bourbon to cut off his retreat.

John, under a pressing need of funds with which to carry on his war with the King of England, summoned a convocation of the States-General, and, after some reluctance on their part, secured an ordinance imposing a tax upon salt. The collection of this tax was openly resisted in many parts of France. In Normandy and Picardy, especially, armed defiance followed. The King of Navarre also violently objected to the enforcement of the ordinance.

John, yielding to his hasty and obstinate temper, resolved that all who resisted his demands should be punished. Against the King of Navarre he was especially incensed, on account of his opposition. On the 5th of April following, while at a banquet in the Château de Rouen, by invitation of the Dauphin Charles, the King of Navarre was arrested by order of John, and thrown into prison. At the same time the Comte de Harcourt, Lord de Graville, Maubué, and Nicholas Duplet, Breton nobles, were seized, and, without any form of trial, were immediately beheaded in an adjoining field; while Charles of Navarre was conducted to Paris, where he was thrown into prison.*

This hasty and cruel act provoked intense hostility on the part of both Breton and French nobles, and changed the purposes of Edward regarding the destination of the troops which he had assembled for an invasion of Brittany. A number of the most

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 322.

powerful of the French and Norman barons immediately entered into alliance with Edward III., which prompted him to undertake an invasion of France through Normandy with a formidable army. This expedition he placed under command of the Duke of Lancaster. The English forces, with those of the French and Norman malcontents, constituted an army of about thirty thousand men of all arms.

This force, with little opposition, robbed and pillaged the country as far as Rouen. On arriving in this vicinity, the Duke of Lancaster learned that John had raised a powerful army, amounting to forty thousand troops, and was prepared to attack him. This led him to retreat to Cherbourg, as he was unable to meet so strong a force.

The Duke of Lancaster regained his former starting-point on the 13th of July. John, under the advice of the leaders of his forces, abandoned the pursuit of the English and Navarrese, and invaded the possessions of the King of Navarre. He, without delay, besieged the city of Evreux, which was speedily taken.

Immediately following this event, he invested the strong fortress of Breteuil, which, after an obstinate resistance, surrendered on the 15th of August.

At this point he learned of the movements of the Black Prince in Périgord, with the evident intention of forming a junction with the forces of the Duke of Lancaster. This John determined to prevent, and accordingly, taking the troops which he had at Breteuil, he sent orders to those of his leading nobles whom he could reach to join him as speedly as pos-

sible, with such forces as they could collect. This was accomplished, and large additions were made to his army. This forced the Black Prince to attempt a retreat into Guienne. He was unable to accomplish this, as John had pushed rapidly forward, and, by crossing the river Vienne, had rendered his retreat impossible.

On the 16th of September, John had concentrated an army of nearly fifty thousand men in the vicinity of Poitiers. He had, however, so conducted his march, that he was not aware of the exact location of the English army, and at this time, when he thought they were before him, they were in reality in his rear. The Black Prince, who had arrived at Chateaulerault on the evening of the 14th of September, found himself barred on his left by the French army. He accordingly halted for two days, allowing the entire French army to pass him. Early on the morning of Saturday, the 17th, he moved forward and reached Chauvigny. His design was to leave the road leading from this point to Poitiers, and, by passing that city on his right, to avoid meeting the French army by passing to its left. To accomplish this, he abandoned much of his baggage in crossing the country; but in this move he was frustrated by a meeting between a portion of his vanguard and the rear-guard of the army of John. This skirmish revealed the real position of the English troops, and rendered a battle inevitable.

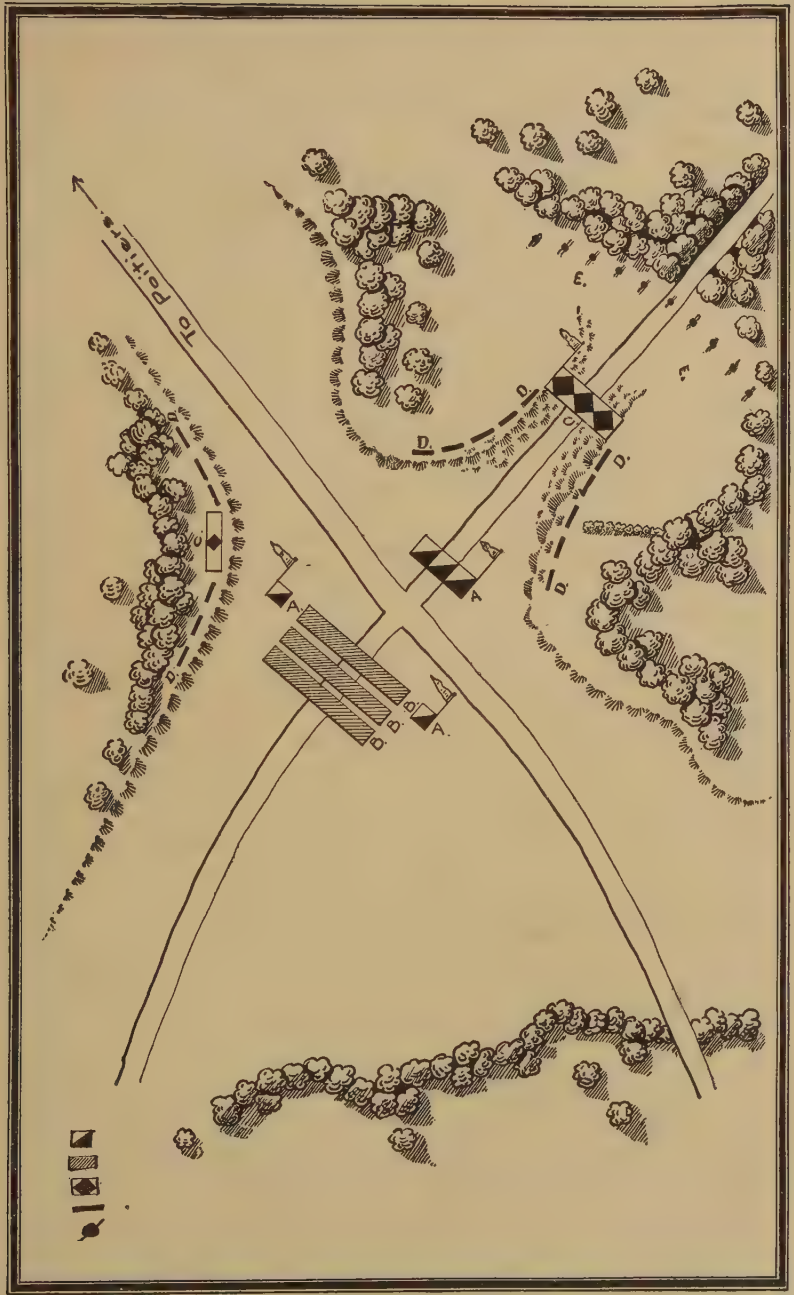
The Black Prince hastened to take as favourable a position as possible for his army, which numbered about twelve thousand, the larger portion of which were bowmen and foot-soldiers, about one-third

only being mounted men-at-arms.* The army of the French numbered nearly fifty thousand, the greater part of which was cavalry, comprising the flower of French chivalry. The Black Prince, aware of this fact, chose a position difficult of access by cavalry. Rough, precipitous in some parts, and crossed by many thick hedges, it was a position which offered great disadvantage to an attacking force of mounted men.

In the selection of this site and the arrangement of his forces, he was guided by the advice and suggestions of Sir John Chandos, to whom he intrusted the general direction of the battle. His forces were arranged with two wings of bowmen and foot-soldiers, which stretched along the elevations on each side of a narrow defile or road, through which not more than four mounted men might pass abreast. Supporting these, on each side, were men-at-arms, behind whom were their horses, protected by a line of waggons and baggage.

John sent Sir Eustace de Ribeumont, with three other chevaliers, to reconnoitre the position and disposition of the army of the Black Prince, and to select the best point for attack, as well as to decide upon the formation for it. This reconnaissance must have been very superficially and imperfectly made, as De Ribeumont, on his return, reported in

* Each man-at-arms added a number of mounted followers which varied at different periods. Under John II. of France each man-at-arms was accompanied by four followers,—two squires and two *castilliers*. Later each had but three. The records of the States-General held at Blois in 1576, gave the King 3000 men-at-arms, making 1200 horse. The men-at-arms were always gentlemen.



BATTLE OF POITIERS. SEPT. 19, 1356.

A. French Mounted Men-at-Arms.
B. French Dismounted Men-at-Arms.
C. English Mounted Men-at-Arms.
D. English Archers.
E. English Waggon Train.

favour of an attack along the narrow defile and by a body of chosen men-at-arms, supported by other troops.

To this imperfect examination of the position of the English army, and the fatally erroneous plan of attack adopted, must be attributed, in large part, the disaster of the day. Had John been less confident in the superiority of the numbers and character of his troops, and had he studied well the nature of the position chosen by the Black Prince in regard to its probable methods of defence, and had he governed his disposition for the attack accordingly, the story of Poitiers, though it might still have been fatal to the fortunes of John, would be a far different one.

During the negotiations for the suspension of hostilities, which were conducted during Sunday, the 18th, the Black Prince strengthened his position by a ditch, and posted a force of bowmen and men-at-arms upon the eminence on his right, with which to strike the French in flank after the armies were engaged in front.

On the morning of Monday, the 19th of September, the battle was opened by the French in an attack by three hundred chosen men-at-arms, led by the Maréchal John de Clermont and Sir Arnoul d'Audrehem, along the narrow defile. The English bowmen on each side of the pass maintained a heavy cross-fire upon the attacking column, which soon threw it into confusion. The supporting body of men-at-arms then advanced to the attack. The repulse of the French was complete. They retreated in disorder, leaving the Maréchal de Clermont dead

upon the field, and the Maréchal d'Audrehem a prisoner in the hands of the English.

At the same time the force posted upon the eminence to the right of the English position, attacking the French division commanded by the Dauphin Charles in flank, and throwing it into disorder, compelled it to retreat from the field. The English then mounted the horses which they had held in readiness, and charged upon the division led by John himself, which was now left to bear alone the brunt of the battle, the division led by the Duc d'Orléans having retreated from the field. At this point John made the second fatal mistake of the day.

Taking his position, he ordered his men-at-arms to dismount, and stationing beside himself Sir Geoffroi de Chargny bearing the Oriflamme,* he awaited the attack of the mounted English men-at-arms. By this injudicious move he sacrificed his greatest advantage in meeting the shock of the charge of the English. For an hour he struggled stubbornly to stem the tide of fate, while the bravest of his nobles were falling around him, and the heroic De Chargny lay slain beside him, still holding in his

* The *Oriflamme* should not be confounded with the banner of the *Fleur de lis*. It is described as being of a red or flame colour, and split up from the bottom, which gave it a peculiar motion in waving in the wind. It had a gilded staff. It was a legend of the monks of Saint Denis that the oriflamme descended from heaven, and they guarded it with great solicitude. It was borne for the last time on the field of Azincourt, after which disaster the monks secreted it, fearing that it might fall into the hands of the English. It was hidden in the treasury of Saint Denis. It appears in an inventory of that treasury in 1534, and is again mentioned as existing in 1549.—Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 341, note, Buchon ed.

grasp the fallen Oriflamme. Left almost alone, he finally surrendered, and, with his youngest son, was led a prisoner to the camp of the Black Prince.

Some writers have claimed that treachery or cowardice on the part of a portion of John's army was the cause of the disaster at Poitiers; but a careful and unprejudiced review of conditions, precedent to and during the battle, leads us to conclude that the immediate causes of the disaster were the twofold errors committed by John. The first was an overconfidence in the superior number of his forces, and an imperfect comprehension of the position of the English, and consequently an erroneous plan of attack. This was his most serious failure. The second was the error of dismounting his cavalry to meet on foot, and clad in heavy and cumbersome armour, the counter-attack of the mounted English men-at-arms.

That John was not lacking in personal courage, his stubborn fight to the last, when he had seen his supports give way on every side and his bravest knights slain around him, bears sufficient evidence. That the French chevaliers were not lacking in bravery is also shown by the large numbers who fell in the stubborn fight, with defeat staring them in the face. The contributing cause was a failure to accept the lesson afforded by the disasters at Crécy, at Saintes, and at Mauron, where a blind confidence in the personal bravery and prowess of mounted men-at-arms led to a neglect to employ a properly armed infantry, conjoined with tactical plans of battle. In these engagements the importance of the English foot-soldiers was very manifest, yet the

French clung tenaciously to former customs of warfare by mounted men-at-arms alone. The English had developed the value of the long-bow, and their archers were a powerful addition to their fighting forces. The battle of Poitiers fully demonstrated that a body of bowmen and infantry, with a proportionate number of mounted men-at-arms, is superior to an equal force of mounted men-at-arms alone.

The loss of the French in killed was very great, and their defeat was as signal as that of the ill-starred field of Crécy. After the battle, the Black Prince returned to Bordeaux, taking John with him as his prisoner, but treating him with courtesy and consideration.

On the 10th of August, 1356, after holding Charles de Blois a prisoner for nearly nine years, Edward signed the act giving him his freedom. This was executed at Westminster, and had been finally secured by the intercession of Innocent VI. On his part, it was agreed by Charles de Blois that he would pay seven hundred thousand florins within five years, and would leave his two sons, John and Guy, as hostages until such sum was paid. It was further agreed that he would deliver to Edward before the 27th of June, 1357, all documents relative to a marriage proposed between John de Bretagne, oldest son of Charles de Blois, and one of the daughters of the King of England. Edward was already the guardian of the young Comte de Montfort, to whom he had affianced the princess Marie.*

Three days before the signing of the treaty of

* Luce, *Hist. de Bert. du Guesclin*, chap. viii., p. 186.

August 10th, Charles de Blois was granted letters of safe-conduct for himself and a party of about forty persons. These important events occurred about one month before the battle of Poitiers. Charles de Blois landed at Tréguier during the latter part of August, and joined his wife, Jeanne de Penthièvre, at Guingamp.

The affairs of De Blois were in a most depressing condition. The English at this time occupied the greater part of Northern and Western Brittany, and held such advanced fortresses in Eastern Brittany as Ploermel and Becherel; and at the time of his return to his duchy, the Duke of Lancaster, with English forces, was in such position as to render it difficult for the King of France, his ally, to send troops to his aid. Some important fortresses were still held with strong garrisons by the King of France. Among these was Pontorson, which was still under command of Sir Pierre de Villiers, with whom Du Guesclin was associated. It is probable that the garrison of this important place was not summoned to join the King before the unfortunate disaster at Poitiers, and hence that Du Guesclin remained at Pontorson during that event.

On the 3d of October the Duke of Lancaster laid siege to Rennes, which was held for Charles de Blois. Its governor was the Sire Penhoet, called Le Fort Boiteuse. He was one of the bravest of the commanders of Charles de Blois, and maintained a most obstinate resistance to every effort of the besiegers.

The siege of Rennes was one of the most important periods in the military history of Du Guesclin,

and here for the first time he becomes a truly historic character.

Every fortified town, such as Rennes, possessed a château or castle and walls or ramparts. Two military commanders existed in each, in consequence. One was the castellan, or governor, who commanded the fortress; and the other the captain, who had charge of the defensive walls. Penhoet was the castellan or governor of Rennes, and Bertrand de Saint Peru was captain of the town.*

Charles the Dauphin had already sent one thousand men-at-arms and five hundred archers to aid the besieged, when Charles de Blois, who was forbidden by his agreement with Edward to take any part in the struggle until his ransom was discharged, reached Paris to appeal for aid for the garrison of Rennes.

In the latter part of November the army of relief had established its headquarters at Vitré. A division of troops under Foulques de Laval, who had been appointed captain-general of these sections by the Dauphin, was sent to guard the frontiers of Maine and Anjou. Among those whose names appear among the men-at-arms were Hue de Kerantret, Macé Giffart, and Jean Raguenel, the chief of sixteen mounted archers, one of whom was Olivier du Guesclin, a younger brother of Bertrand.

The wooded region between Pontorson, Dinan, Fougères, and Rennes was the theatre of the operations of Du Guesclin against the English. At the time of the siege of Rennes he was unable to reach that city with his forces before the Duke of Lan-

* Luce, chap. vii., p. 190.

caster had made the investment complete. He therefore occupied himself with incessant attacks upon the forces of the English from unexpected quarters, and harassed them in every way. This led the Duke to seek to ascertain who, by such daring and bravery, was the cause of so much annoyance.

During the months of January and February, 1357, the Duke of Lancaster laid siege to Dinan, since it was the route which the French forces, sent to the aid of Rennes, most easily followed. The town was poorly prepared to withstand a siege, and through its governor concluded a truce with the commander of the English forces, agreeing to surrender the town if not relieved by a date fixed.

During this suspension of hostilities, Olivier du Guesclin was riding unarmed in the country near the town, when he was met by Sir Thomas Canterbury of the English forces, and made a prisoner by him. He led him to his camp, and demanded a ransom of one thousand florins. Bertrand du Guesclin learned of this breach of the truce while he was in camp between Pontorson and Dinan. He immediately mounted his horse and repaired to the tent of the Duke of Lancaster, where he found the prince playing a game of draughts. To the offer of a glass of wine by the prince, Du Guesclin replied, "I will not drink until justice shall have been done." He then explained the cause of his displeasure, and accused Sir Thomas Canterbury of violating the treaty by the arrest of his brother Olivier. The Duke of Lancaster immediately summoned Canterbury before him, and said, "Here is Du Guesclin, who states, that, in spite of the truce,

you have this day made his brother a prisoner, and have demanded a ransom. What have you to say?"

"Sire," replied Canterbury, regarding Du Guesclin with a haughty air, "if this Bertrand, whom I see here, pretends to maintain that I have done anything for which I should be censured, and which a true chevalier should not do, here is my gage: I am ready to prove my right on the field of battle, body to body, on equal terms."

Du Guesclin, without replying, took up the gage, and then said, as he held the gage in his hand, "False chevalier! your defiance I accept, and before these lords I will fight you before night shall fall. False chevalier, traitor! you shall bite the dust before these lords, or I will die of shame."

"I will not fail you, do not fear," replied Canterbury, "I will not sleep until I shall have fought you." "And I," replied Du Guesclin, "swear by the Holy Trinity that I will eat but three sops of wine* before I shall be armed."

"I will see you well equipped," said one of the chevaliers† among the followers of the Duke of Lancaster, "and will lend you my best *destrier*,‡ for I wish to see the trial between you."

The tidings of the combat were soon spread through the beleaguered town. All most earnestly

* Three pieces of bread soaked in wine.

† Sir John Chandos.

‡ *Destrier*, a large war-horse, so called from being led by the right hand of one of the squires accompanying the chevalier; another bore his bacinet an iron helmet or casque of basin shape (hence its name), and another his shield.—Sainte Palaye.

desired the success of Du Guesclin, and the citizens were extremely anxious as to the result.

Among the dames of Dinan was one who ventured to predict success for Du Guesclin. Tiphaine Raguenel, daughter of Sir Robert Raguenel and Jeanne de Dinan, Vicomtesse de la Bellière, was she who prophesied the success of Bertrand. She was then in her twenty-fourth year, and was distinguished for her beauty and attainments as well as for her birth. She was "the wisest and best instructed person in that whole country, and was learned in astronomy and philosophy." *

In common with the women of her country and time, she was keenly alive to the glory of the chivalry of the period; and a brave chevalier, though plain in person, might justly attract her attention and admiration.

The lists were erected in the market-place of Dinan, and at the appointed time the Duke of Lancaster was present with twenty chevaliers of his followers. Sir Robert Knolles † and Thomas de Grandson endeavoured to persuade Du Guesclin to accept the release of his brother without ransom. This he declined to do, and indignantly demanded that Canterbury should keep his word.

* Cuvelhier, v. 2326.

† He was a member of an English family of Cheshire. He took part in the wars in France on the side of the English, and obtained considerable possessions in Guyenne. In that section the family was called *Canolle*. He was one of the participants in the "Battle of the Thirty," on the side of the English. The latter years of his life were spent in England, where he is said to have died at Norfolk, at the age of ninety years, on the 15th of August, 1407, and was buried at Whitefriars in London.

At the first onset the two opponents met with such fierceness that their lances were splintered. Drawing their swords they fought until Canterbury, missing a stroke at his opponent's head, dropped his sword from his hand. Du Guesclin, leaping from his horse, threw the sword outside the lists, and called upon Canterbury to dismount and fight on foot. This he declined to do. Du Guesclin then hastily removed the armour from his legs, in order to allow of freer motion. Scarcely had he accomplished this, when Canterbury attempted to ride him down. Slipping aside, he thrust his sword into the flank of Canterbury's horse as he passed, which caused him to swerve violently and fall, bearing his rider to the ground.

Du Guesclin was upon him in an instant, and, tearing the bacinet from his head, struck him upon the head and face with such violence with his iron gauntlets, that Canterbury was soon blinded by his own blood. The governor of Dinan and other chevaliers interposed in behalf of the fallen knight, saying, " Friend Bertrand, you have done enough, the day and honour are yours."

" Fair Sire," replied Du Guesclin, " by the faith which I owe to God, the judge, either he shall surrender as my prisoner, as he has held my brother Olivier, or I will kill him upon this field."

" Bertrand," exclaimed Sir Robert Knolles," yield your champion to the Duke of Lancaster, who will appreciate the favour. You have done enough, he is at your mercy."

" I yield to your request," replied Bertrand, and accordingly approaching the Duke, and bending his

knee, he said: "Noble Duke, I beg and entreat you not to blame me if I had killed this murderer. Had it not been for regard for you, I would have killed him." "He deserves nothing better," replied the Duke, smiling. "Your brother Olivier shall be freed and he shall have a thousand livres with which to equip himself. You shall have the arms of the fallen chevalier, and his horse also. As for him, he shall never again appear at my court, for traitors are not admitted there."

The Duke of Lancaster, after having drunk wine offered him in honour of the affair, returned to his camp. The fortunate issue of this adventure added greatly to the renown of Du Guesclin. Soon after this event, the succour promised by the Dauphin Charles having arrived, the Duke of Lancaster withdrew his troops, and concentrated his efforts upon the siege of Rennes. Every attempt on the part of the Duke to take the town by assault failed, and he finally decided to invest the place so closely as to compel its surrender by starvation.

Unable to gain entry to the town with his forces, Du Guesclin was indefatigable in his efforts to harass the English. Keeping the closest watch upon all their movements, he cut off their foraging parties, intercepted their supply trains, captured their scouts, and attacked them constantly. These skirmishes were planned for unexpected times and places, and often in night attacks he burned portions of their camp. So annoyed was the Duke of Lancaster by his want of success, that he vowed that he would never depart from before Rennes until his banner should have floated upon its ramparts.

Finally, in the failure of his assaults, he decided to have recourse to a mine.* The governor of Rennes, suspecting this resort, instructed the people living near the ramparts to suspend small vessels of copper upon the walls of the lower portion of their houses. The vibrations of these vessels disclosed the site of the operations, and the garrison was enabled to countermine. Piercing the gallery, several men-at-arms entered it, killed a number of the English miners, and destroyed their work.

The Duke of Lancaster was greatly irritated by this failure, and attempted through a stratagem to draw the garrison out of their barriers. Knowing that they were suffering for meat, he caused a herd of swine to be driven out into the plain, before the walls, and to the borders of the ditches, thinking that the garrison would come out to secure so rich a prize. The governor, Penhoet, however, suspected his design, and prevented the garrison from attempting to capture them. He ordered a sow to be hung up by the feet near one of the gates of the town, facing the plain upon which the swine of the Duke of Lancaster were gathered. At the same time the drawbridge was lowered. The sow, when hung up, squealed so vigorously that all the herd of swine beyond the ditch immediately ran upon the bridge where the sow was tied. She was released, and ran into the town, followed by the entire herd. The bridge was then raised, and the attempt to draw out the garrison failed.

* Mining at that time differed from that of the present. It consisted in undermining the walls, which were supported by pieces of wood, called *merins*, which were set on fire, and in collapsing allowed the walls or tower to fall with them.

The scarcity of provisions becoming very pressing, the governor decided to send a message to Charles de Blois, who was at Nantes, to urge the sending of immediate aid. This was almost an impossibility on account of the close investment maintained by the forces of the Duke of Lancaster. It was planned that a citizen who volunteered, and whose family was suffering for food, should make the attempt. Leaving the barriers, and pretending that he was a deserter, he was pursued by the garrison as far as the English outposts. Here he was captured, and taken before the Duke of Lancaster. He stated that the besieged were on the point of starvation, but that they had received tidings that on the morrow, four or five thousand Germans, auxiliaries of the King of France, were to arrive by a certain route. At the same time, the inhabitants of the city rang the bells, sounded musical instruments, and made other demonstrations of apparent rejoicing.

The Duke was completely deceived, and started in haste, with the greater part of his forces, in the direction indicated by the assumed deserter, as that from which the pretended succour was to arrive. Meanwhile the messenger escaped on the same night, and hastened toward Nantes. He soon fell into the hands of Du Guesclin's forces, and told his story. Learning that the Duke had gone to seek an imaginary foe, Du Guesclin immediately attacked his camp, setting the tents on fire, and capturing a large quantity of provisions and supplies. Forcing the English lines, he entered the city of Rennes. Among his captures were one hundred waggons, loaded with salted meats, wine, and other supplies.

After having unloaded them in the city, he paid the cartmen for their provisions which he had taken, and sent them, with their waggons and horses, to the Duke of Lancaster, with a courteous assurance that he would visit him when occasion offered.*

His entry into the city caused great rejoicing, and the garrison and citizens gave him an enthusiastic reception. Within the city he found his cousin, Olivier de Mauny, and also the aunt with whom he had taken refuge when he left his home in his boyhood.

The Duke of Lancaster soon found that he had been made the victim of a ruse, and, on his return from his unprofitable expedition, was so impressed with the genius of Du Guesclin, that he sent him an invitation, through his own herald, to visit his camp with four attendants, under a safe-conduct. The invitation was accepted by Du Guesclin, who made the herald a handsome present, and immediately visited the camp of the Duke, by whom he was cordially received, and who accosted him as follows †:—

"You are welcome, Bertrand; I knew well that you would accept my invitation."

"Sire," replied Bertrand, "I am always ready to comply with your requests, tending toward the establishment of peace with the lord whom I serve, and as fully as you may desire."

"And who is your lord?" inquired the Duke.

"Sire," replied Bertrand, "you know full well:

* "A vous se recommand et à ceulx par dessà,
Et dit c'est vo voisins qui véoir vous venra."
Cuvelhier, vv. 1528, 1529.

† Cuvelhier, vv. 1627–1665.

it is the Duke, Charles de Blois, who holds Brittany by right of Madame, his wife."

The Duke replied, "One hundred thousand men will be killed before he shall possess it."

"Sire," said Bertrand, "a number will be slain, but the more will remain for those who survive."

This reply pleased the Duke, who at once said to him, "Bertrand, will you not join my service? It will be greatly to your advantage, and in me you will find a true friend. I will grant you lands and whatever you may desire."

"Sire," replied Bertrand, "by my faith, you would hold me a traitor and your mortal enemy, were I sworn to you and then went to serve another. God forbid that I should commit such a fault! but, if peace were established between you and my lord, I would willingly serve you."

This reply greatly pleased the Duke, and raised Du Guesclin in the esteem in which he already held him. Wine and refreshments were now served. Among the knights in attendance upon the Duke was Sir William Brambourg, brother of the commander of the Castle of Forgeray, which Du Guesclin had captured. He addressed him, and proffered him a challenge for three thrusts with the lance.

"Good sir," replied Bertrand, as he offered his hand to the Englishman, "by my honour, I will not fail you. I call God to witness that you shall have six if necessary!"

The Duke of Lancaster gave his consent, and the morrow was fixed for the meeting, and the battle-field chosen was the space between the English camp and the ditch of the city of Rennes. The

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Duke of Lancaster, not wishing to be behind Du Guesclin in generosity, which he had shown in the present made to the Duke's herald, presented him with a fine war-horse. In accepting it, Bertrand replied, "Until to-day I have met neither duke, count, nor prince who has given me the value of a denier; if I have gained anything, it is with the point of my sword; but, since you deign to present me with so fine a horse, I will prove him before you to-morrow." He then returned to Rennes.

The commandant, learning of the engagement appointed for the next day, feared some treachery, and endeavoured to dissuade Du Guesclin from keeping the meeting; but he replied that he had given his word, and could not believe that the Duke would fail in his, and that he had full confidence that God would maintain the right.

Early on the following morning Du Guesclin put on an undershirt, buttoned up, and a haubergeon or coat of mail, and over all a stout jacket. The governor of Rennes offered him a steel breastplate, which he refused. A lance and a solid shield completed his equipment. He attended mass at the church, and, after having taken a cup of wine, mounted his horse and went to the place of meeting. On his way he met his aunt, who with tears besought him not to expose himself to the treachery of the English. To her Bertrand replied gaily, "Go home, kiss your husband, and prepare dinner, for, please God, if my champion is ready, I will return before you have had time to light your fire."

The whole city of Rennes was aroused to view the contest, and the people lined the walls and bat-

tlements in order to watch their champion. The Duke of Lancaster, with the Earl of Pembroke, kept the field, and warned all, by proclamation of the herald, that no one should aid either combatant, nor approach nearer than the length of twenty lances.

Upon the signal, each took his shield and lance and spurred fiercely against the other. At the first thrust, Du Guesclin struck the shield of his opponent, and, the point of his lance glancing, pierced Brambourg's coat of mail on his side without inflicting a wound, while his lance struck the helmet of Bertrand without any result. Two more passes were made, when Du Guesclin, halting before his opponent, said: "Brambourg, are you satisfied? Out of regard for the Duke, whose guest I am, I have spared you until the present, but I promise you nothing if you desire more." "Let us proceed," replied Brambourg sullenly.

Returning to the charge with greater impetuosity than before, Du Guesclin, at the first thrust, struck his adversary's shield just below the blazon, and, penetrating it and his coat of mail, the lance point entered his body, throwing him from his horse half dead. "I trust that you have had the worth of your money!" cried Du Guesclin to the vanquished. "If I had not spared you, out of regard for the Duke of Lancaster, you should not have fared so easily."

The Duke of Lancaster hastened to extend his congratulations to Du Guesclin, who, having made a present of the horse of the vanquished knight to one of the Duke's heralds, returned to Rennes, where

he received the felicitations of the populace, and attended the banquet given in his honour.

On the afternoon of the day of this encounter, the Duke of Lancaster made an assault upon the walls by means of a "belfry," or tower,* which he had constructed. The assault was interrupted by the coming of night. The belfry was left in its position near the walls, with a number of men-at-arms and archers remaining to guard it, with the intention of recommencing the assault at daybreak on the following morning. Du Guesclin, however, provided a disappointment for the besiegers. Taking advantage of the darkness of the night, he, with the governor of the city and five hundred cross-bow men, made a sortie and attacked the tower, setting it on fire. In a short time the great structure was destroyed by the flames.

The added prestige of Du Guesclin's victory over Brambourg led other English knights to seek an encounter with him.

Froissart † has given the history of a number in which the Breton warrior took part during the siege.

The siege of Rennes, which had been so prolonged by the obstinate resistance of its garrison and the consequent failure of his every effort to capture the city, led the Duke of Lancaster to desire to raise the siege. This, however, he hesi-

* The "belfry" was a square tower, usually three stories in height, and composed of timbers. It was covered upon the outside with boards, hides, or even with plates of iron, thus affording protection to those within. It was constructed so as to be moved upon rollers near to or against the walls of a fortress, which it overtopped. It usually afforded room inside for about one hundred and fifty men.

† Froissart, Buchon ed., Liv. I., Part II., chap. lvii., p. 369.

tated to do on account of the oath which he had taken never to leave the city until his banner should have floated upon its walls. An order received from Edward III., dated April 28, 1357, directed him to raise the siege forthwith. Du Guesclin, knowing of the oath which the Duke had taken, led the chevaliers and authorities of the town to consent that the Duke might enter the city with ten attendants, and place his banner over the entrance gate, provided he would then abandon the siege. This was agreed to, and three days afterwards the Duke entered the town. In preparation for this event, Du Guesclin had directed that every man should be armed and appear in the street, and that the shops should display in their windows meat, bread, and provisions. On entering the city the Duke was impressed with the apparent number of the garrison and the abundance of food displayed.

After placing his banner upon the walls, he partook of wine and left the city. His banner was immediately torn down by the citizens. Raising the siege on the 3d of July, he withdrew with his forces to Auray, where he joined the Comte de Montfort.

The heroic resistance of the garrison of Rennes was a consolation to the people of France in the deep depression which followed the disaster at Poitiers. The reputation which Du Guesclin had achieved by his prowess and genius had extended throughout France, and the fame of the Breton warrior had become a matter of national interest.

As soon as Charles de Blois learned of the successful defence of Rennes and the raising of the siege by the Duke of Lancaster, he repaired to that

city in order to express his gratitude to its governor and its garrison. To Du Guesclin he showed his appreciation of the distinguished service which he had rendered, by granting to him the lordship of Roche Derrien in the county of Penthièvre.*

An incident referred by many historians to this period, and by others to events immediately following the affair at Montmuran, displays the prowess and skill of Du Guesclin, even in adverse conditions. Whatever may have been the date, whether in 1354, when Sir Arnoul d'Audrehem was in command at Pontorson, as claimed by Luce,† or in 1357, at the termination of the siege of Rennes, as held by d'Argentré, ‡ all agree upon the details of the affair.

Among the prisoners taken by Du Guesclin at Montmuran was a near relative of Sir William Troussel, an English knight of distinction. Troussel sent to him a letter, in which he requested that he be allowed to become the surety for his relative, and that the latter be set free. Du Guesclin declined to grant the request, whereupon Troussel challenged him to a combat with two strokes of the sword and three courses of the lance. Du Guesclin accepted the defiance, on condition that the vanquished should pay the sum of one hundred golden crowns for a banquet for those who were present at the combat. A day was appointed, and Pontorson was the place selected for the meeting.

* Cuvelhier, Part I., v. 2015. Luce, in his history (chap. viii., p. 228), questions this statement of Cuvelhier as to the gift of Roche Derrien at this time.

† Luce, *Hist. de Bert. du Guesclin*, p. 131.

‡ D'Argentré, *Hist. de Bretagne* (ed. 1618), p. 409.

Troussel was at that time in the service of the Duke of Lancaster. Well aware of the prowess of Du Guesclin, the Duke endeavoured to dissuade his followers from the risk of such a meeting, and, having heard that Du Guesclin was then suffering from a fever, he urged that it would be no honour to contend with a man who was ill. Troussel accordingly sent word to Du Guesclin, that, learning of his illness, he would wait until his recovery. To this message Du Guesclin sent this reply: "He that has challenged me need make no more excuses for me than I make for myself: just as I am I will measure myself against my antagonist. It is dishonourable for a challenger to withdraw his gage without striking a blow. Let Messire William keep his appointment! as for me, I am determined to keep mine; I will be at the place of meeting and will fight him."

On the day appointed Troussel was at Pontorson, accompanied by his squire. He rode into the lists mounted on a fine war-horse. Du Guesclin also entered the lists accompanied by his squire. He was pale, and appeared weak from the effects of the fever, which caused his friends much apprehension.

The combatants immediately faced each other, and dashed forward to the attack. At the first pass Troussel dealt so powerful a blow upon the saddle-bow of Du Guesclin as to cause him to lose his seat in the saddle. This he quickly regained, and, after the two strokes with the sword, they took their lances. Du Guesclin, under the stimulus of the strife, seemed to have regained his wonted skill and strength, and at the first thrust sent his antag-

onist to the ground, pierced through the shoulder, which compelled him to acknowledge himself vanquished.

At the close of the engagement the squires of the two combatants entered into a contest, in which that of Du Guesclin was victorious.

CHAPTER V.

THE DAUPHIN AND THE STATES-GENERAL.

1357–1359.

The Dauphin and the States-General—Origin and power of the States-General—The treaty of Bordeaux—Conspiracy of Etienne Marcel—Intrigues of Charles the Bad—"The Jacquerie"—The siege of Melun—Bravery of Du Guesclin.

DURING the interval in which these events were transpiring in the province of Brittany, the Dauphin Charles was struggling with the difficulties surrounding the administration of the government, which the imprisonment of his father had placed in his hands.

Barely twenty years of age at this time, his youth and inexperience rendered him incapable of coping with the animosities of the nobles and the dissatisfaction of a large part of the people, which had been aroused previous to the disaster of Poitiers by the harsh and unjust measures of his father.

The reverse at Poitiers had almost destroyed the ruling powers of France. The continued misfortunes of the King, together with his ill-judged policy, had so divided the sentiment of the nobility as

to prove a source of discouragement to those who still remained loyal to him.

On the 15th of October, 1356, the States-General had been convened at Paris to consider the existing state of affairs, and propose measures for the conduct of the government.

The first provision necessary was to establish a stable government during the imprisonment of King John, and until he should return. Another equally important question was the redress of certain alleged grievances. The first question was met by the appointment of twelve members from each of the three estates, which body was granted full power to decide and arrange all questions of state. In the selection of this body of Deputies, no attention was paid to the wishes of the Dauphin; and the trusted counsellors of King John were not included in the number.

After a prolonged conference, the States-General decided to grant a subsidy.* This reluctant grant was accompanied by demands for the correction of certain abuses which were charged to the policy of King John,—the liberation of Charles of Navarre, whom they declared had been unjustly imprisoned; and that the Dauphin should consent to be controlled by the committee of Deputies chosen.

As the combination was one hostile to himself, as well as to his father, and virtually deprived him of all autonomy, he closed the convention on the 2d of November, and directed the Deputies to return to their homes.

Failing to secure the desired grant from the

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 363.

States-General, the Dauphin endeavoured to secure needed pecuniary assistance by the issue of a debased currency. Failing in this, on account of violent opposition, he was compelled to summon a convention of the States-General on the 3d of March, 1357.

Unable to meet and overcome any of the demands of the Deputies, the Dauphin was obliged to accede to their wishes, and grant their demands for reform, and also to liberate Charles of Navarre. In all of these, especially the latter, the efforts of Etienne Marcel, Mayor of Paris, were conspicuous. The States-General had gained a signal victory over the Crown in curtailing its privileges and lessening its prestige.

Much discussion has arisen as to the origin of the States-General. There have been many attempts to connect the assemblies of the days of Charlemagne with those of the early part of the seventeenth century. Between them there appears to exist an irreconcilable difference. The States-General seem to have been established in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the cities had gained so much in wealth and power that the presence of their representatives was desired in royal council. Receiving their charters in large part from the King, he assumed the right to summon them in council in time of need. The nobles, the clergy, and the burghers constituted what was known as "the three estates."

Nothing could be published as the opinion of the whole, unless all of the three orders had concurred in its adoption. The regulation and levying of

taxes, as well as their collection, was one of the recognised rights of the States-General.

Their convocation was, however, irregular and infrequent, and consequently there was no steady and continuous development of their powers. They failed to become a legislative body through their neglect to secure and maintain the right to regulate all revenue. They were usually convened when a special impost or levy was required, and the sovereign desired their support and consent in securing the aid which he needed.

Another fact which tended to limit the power and influence of the States-General was the position of the nobility. It was simply a caste. The high development of the feudal system in France placed the princes in a position of almost entire independence of the King. In their own provinces they were nearly autocratic. This prevented the nobles and commoners from uniting in political affairs. The nobles strove to maintain their authority over their own subjects, and also to curb the growth of the power of their neighbours. This led to the oppression of the common people. The clergy, bound by much the same traditions of caste as the nobility, had little sympathy with the commoners, and usually united with the nobles against them.

John, who was still at Bordeaux, hearing of the action of the States-General, was much incensed at their impeachment of his most trusted counsellors and their usurpation of the royal privileges. He accordingly sent an order, to be published at Paris, forbidding the levying of the subsidy granted, and also prohibiting the convocation of the States-

General upon the date which they had appointed for another assembly.

This royal edict was received at Paris, and was the cause of great excitement. The enemies of the King, and those hostile to the Dauphin, united in fomenting the existing discontent and discord. In all of this opposition, the Dauphin found in Etienne Marcel a most subtle and persistent enemy, who, in league with Robert le Coq, Bishop of Laon, was a willing tool of Charles of Navarre in his treacherous schemes.

It is evident that Charles of Navarre had cherished the hope of appropriating for himself the crown of France through the aid of the corrupt agents whom he had interested in his cause, among those influential in the affairs of France. A careful review of the leading events of the period immediately subsequent to his release from imprisonment indicates that he proposed, by uniting the opponents of the Dauphin and fomenting further discords among the people, to obtain possession of Paris and of the government. This latter he hoped to accomplish the more surely by a treaty with Edward III., whose aid he expected to gain by granting such concessions of territory and sovereignty in France as he might be compelled to yield.

Edward, on his part, since the victory of Poitiers, had been dominated by one controlling desire, and that was to possess himself of certain of the fairest portions of France, and at the same time to extort from John the largest possible sum for his freedom. This was undoubtedly the motive which induced

him to sign the treaty of Bordeaux, on the 23d of March, 1357, by which he bound himself to refrain from any hostilities until April 21, 1359. Early in 1358, some of the preliminary measures for peace were arranged between him and his prisoner. These, however, were not ratified at Paris.

This condition of affairs led to an open breach between Etienne Marcel and the Dauphin Charles.

At the same time Charles the Bad of Navarre, supported by a strong faction in Paris and by the Bishop of Laon, entered into negotiations with Edward III., by which the introduction of English troops into Paris, under various pretexts, should be secured. While aspiring to the crown of France himself, Charles the Bad did not fail to recognise Edward's ambition in the same direction, and, with the treacherous duplicity for which he was famous, apparently lent his aid to Edward, while he covertly planned to turn the whole procedure to his own ends and benefit. He accordingly negotiated a secret treaty with Edward, by which the dismemberment of France and its partition between them should be accomplished.

The death of Marcel on the 31st of July, 1358, as the result of his own treacherous schemes, removed an important actor in the proposed drama, and forced a more open declaration of the intention of the English to make common cause with Charles the Bad against the Dauphin.

The occurrence at this time of what is known as the "Insurrection of the Jacquerie" introduced a startling element into affairs.

This was an uprising aimed against the nobility,

and was led by one Jacques Bonhomme (James Goodman). This insurrection was mainly participated in by the lowest and most ignorant orders of society. The ravages committed were not confined to any class, but were equally violent and destructive among all conditions of society.* Like all movements of a similar character by an ignorant populace, the effort was a failure, and those concerned in it were dispersed by the organised effort of the intelligent classes. Its end was hastened by its excesses, which united the better elements of society in suppressing it.

The efforts of Charles the Bad to harass and defy the Dauphin were seconded and aided by the English, and led to the laying waste of many sections, and the pillaging and capture of towns and important castles belonging to the King of France. This condition favoured the rapid development and extension of bands of marauders, largely composed of English men-at-arms, and known as the "Free Companies." Of these special mention will be made elsewhere.

Longing to end the ills with which his kingdom was oppressed, and desiring to gain his own freedom, John II. signed a treaty at London, on the 24th of March, 1359, which was in every respect most disastrous to France. By its provisions, in addition to a payment of four millions of ecus † of gold, or three millions of francs, he ceded to Edward III. Normandy, Saintonge, Périgord, Agenais, Limousin, Bigorre, Guines, Ponthieu, Quercy,

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., pp. 375, 376.

† A coin established by Philippe de Valois in 1349.

Poitou, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, Boulogne, and the suzerainty of Brittany, or nearly one half of his kingdom.*

On the 19th of May the Dauphin summoned a convocation of the States-General to which to submit the treaty. A comparatively small number of Deputies responded, partly from disaffection, but mainly from fear, since all the principal routes to Paris lay near to some of the strongholds which were held by garrisons of the English or Navarrese. Before those who met in assembly the treaty was read, and was received with extreme indignation and anger.

The Assembly declared that it was neither acceptable nor feasible, and that the only reply to such propositions was to declare war upon the English. The refusal of the Dauphin and the States-General to ratify this treaty excited Edward's anger to the highest pitch. He immediately determined to invade France at the head of a powerful army. He was, however, compelled to wait three months for the expiration of the truce, which he had granted to John at the time of signing his articles of ransom.

In the meantime the Dauphin was most active in preparing for the events which he foresaw must occur, and which would bear so heavily upon France. He sought to induce Vladimir III. of Denmark to undertake an expedition into England, and strove to institute in all parts of his kingdom active preparation for defence. The States-General entered

* Commines, *Hist. de Charles le Mauv.*, Part I., p. 390; M. Dupont, *Rev. Anglo-Franç.*, vol. i., p. 388.

into these efforts at preparation with zeal. The nobles, the clergy, and even the peasantry, took up the work with earnestness.

In this connection an interesting fact has been noted regarding the enthusiasm and patriotism of the serfs or bondmen. In a little brochure,* the success obtained by Guillaume Alone, himself a bondman, in bringing the members of this class into a form to constitute an effective part of the fighting force, is very clearly given.

The possibility of employing this portion of the peasantry as a part of the military force of the country was early held by Du Guesclin in opposition to the opinion of the greater part of his contemporaries. His early life had led him to recognise the traits of this class. Their occupation necessarily developed strength, endurance, and courage, and at the outset of his career he chose men from this class as his scouts and skirmishers.

The Dauphin was now twenty-three years of age, but his character was such that it enabled him to overlook his resentment and personal animosities, and devote his entire energies to the pressing duties before him. He felt that it was of primary importance that his capital should be made secure. To insure this, he, on the 1st of June, appointed Regnault de Gouillons, a chevalier of ability and bravery, to be Captain-General of Paris, conferring upon him full and independent military powers in the territory over which he was given command.

It was not only necessary to place Paris in a condition of defence, but also to insure its communi-

* *Guillaume Alone*, par S. Luce, 1875.

cations, and prevent any possibility of cutting off its supplies. This was specially important, as the English had control of the department of Marne and Oise, while Melun, Poissy, Meulan, and Nantes were under control of the Navarrese. The possession of Melun by a hostile force was a special source of apprehension. The followers of Navarre, holding that portion of this town situated on the left bank of the Seine, controlled all approaches from the upper Seine, as well as threatened the mills from which the flour for the city was obtained.

Charles the Dauphin still held that part of Melun on the river, and determined to recapture the portion upon the opposite bank, held by the Navarrese. Accordingly, on the 18th of June, he besieged the Château with a strong force. The garrison was commanded by two redoubtable captains,—Martin Enriquez (de Navarre) and the Bascon de Mareuil.

Three queens resided in this Château,—Jeanne d'Evreux, widow of Charles the Fair; Blanche de Navarre, widow of Philippe de Valois (the one the aunt, the second the sister, of the King of Navarre); and finally Jeanne de France, wife of Charles the Bad, and sister of the Duc de Normandie.*

As soon as all preparations were completed, a general assault was ordered. The besiegers advanced in two lines. The bowmen and archers, protected by shields, formed the first; while the men-at-arms, bearing lances, bucklers, and targes, supported them in the second line. Passing the ditches, they approached the walls with scaling ladders for the assault. The besieged were well prepared for the

* Luce,. chap. ix., p. 298.

attack, and met the advance with a shower of arrows and heavy bolts.

While his forces were making the assault, the Dauphin was watching them from the windows of a neighbouring house. He exclaimed to those who surrounded him: "I should be at the head of my troops, it is my hands which should strike the first blow, and yet you compel me to remain here with folded arms while my brave soldiers give their lives for me!" "Sire," replied his counsellors, "leave to your people their task; to-day it is your duty to protect yourself from treason. An evil blow is soon given. If we do not guard your person, the funeral torches will soon be lighted for you, and we shall have lost our last hope."

Among the many distinguished chevaliers present was Bertrand du Guesclin, and it is here probably that he first bore arms in the direct service of the King of France.

The part which he played was eminently characteristic, and Cuvelhier * and other chroniclers have minutely recorded his brilliant feats of arms on this occasion. Advancing among the foremost of the besiegers, he recognised the Bascon de Mareuil upon the walls. "Brigand!" † he exclaimed, "would that I could reach you! I swear by Heaven that I would put you beyond the power of the surgeons to cure you, could I but meet you on the battlements

* Cuvelhier, vv. 3541–3665. The Trouvère places the date of this event in 1363, and later writers have followed him; but the date of its occurrence was 1359. See Luce, *Chroniques de Jean Froissart*, vol. v., p. 48, note 2.

† A name given to the ordinary foot-soldier, bearing a buckler, and wearing a *brigandine*.

face to face!" Seizing a long ladder, he took it upon his shoulder and carried it to the walls; raising it against them, and covering his head with his shield, he commenced to mount. The Dauphin, seeing the bold action, inquired, "Who is that brave soldier who is mounting there?" "It is Bertrand du Guesclin," replied his counsellors, "the Breton warrior, so famed for his prowess, and who has fought so signally in the war of Brittany in the cause of your cousin, Charles de Blois." "What a brave soldier!" replied Charles. "I will remember him."

The Bascon de Mareuil, angry at the taunts of Du Guesclin, caused the largest stones to be brought to him, in order to hurl them upon him, and shouted to his bowmen: "Crush that fellow mounting there! See how large he is, so short and stout, and how puffed up he is because he is in armour! It would be fine to throw him into the ditch; he would have his heart broken very quickly by the fall. Give him a good load! He is evidently a porter from Paris in armour; they say he is broken-winded."

Paying no attention to these insults, Du Guesclin continued to mount, and challenged the Bascon de Mareuil to meet him. The latter seized a large cask of stones and discharged the contents upon the brave assailant. The ladder was broken, and Du Guesclin was precipitated, head first, into the ditch. The Dauphin, seeing the accident, immediately sent his attendants to extricate him. Du Guesclin was stunned by the fall, but was brought back and his armour loosened, and he soon regained consciousness. Starting up, he demanded of his friends

about him, "Good sirs, what has happened? How goes it? Have you taken the fortress? Have the enemy surrendered?" "No," replied the chevaliers addressed; "they desire to surrender upon one condition only, and that is, that the Duc de Normandie raises the siege and returns to Paris." "By my faith," replied Du Guesclin, "the Duc will never consent to it. Back to the assault! Let him who loves me follow me!" Taking hardly time to replace his armour, he hastened to the barriers, and advanced where the bravest had not dared to go. He attacked the garrison, who had taken the opportunity of his misfortune to make a sortie, killing many, and driving them back under the shelter of their defences.* The enemy sounded the retreat, and night terminated the assault for that day.

During the night, negotiations for a truce were concluded through the intervention of the queens then in the Château, and the preliminaries of a peace were arranged. Accordingly, on the 31st of July, the Dauphin raised the siege and returned to Paris. "On the 21st of August a treaty was signed at Pontoise. On the same day *la reine Blanche*, sister of Charles the Bad, and widow of Philippe de Valois, ceded Melun to the Crown of France in exchange for Vernon, Pontoise, the vicounty of Gisors, Gournay, and Neufchâtel-en-Bray."

This peace was, however, but a treacherous act of Charles the Bad; for, under his secret treaty of August 1st with Edward III., his forces, under pretence of being the mercenaries of the King of England, continued their hostilities against the Dauphin.

* Cuvelhier, v. 3665.

His treachery was shown in many of the events which followed. Shortly after the 18th of November, while under a safe-conduct granted by the Dauphin at the request of Charles the Bad, Jean Grailly, the Captal de Buch, took by assault in the early morning the important fortress of Clermont-en-Beauvasis. In December following, Charles the Bad was active in a plot, hatched at Paris, to dethrone the Dauphin, and it is claimed that he had planned to assassinate him with his own hand.

During these distracting conditions the Dauphin was obliged to prepare to meet a most formidable invasion by the English.

CHAPTER VI.

CAMPAIGN IN BRITTANY—THE FREE COMPANIES.

1359–1362.

Edward III. invades France—Operations in Brittany—Du Guesclin's success—He is made a prisoner—His release—The treaty of Brétigny—Ransom of John II.—Du Guesclin visits England—His campaign against the Free Companies—The Dauphin at the head of affairs—His confidence in Du Guesclin—The battle of Brignais—Victory of the Free Companies—Their rise and development—Activity of Du Guesclin against them.

EARLY in October the Duke of Lancaster, with a strong force, laid waste Picardy and Artois while the Dauphin was unable to detach a sufficient body of troops to check him. On the 30th of the same month Edward III. landed at Calais with a large and well-appointed army, and opened a campaign which he had intended should prove most depressing to the Dauphin. But Charles, unable to raise a large army with which to meet him in the field, was indefatigable in disposing of the forces at his command in reënforcing the garrisons of his towns and castles. Even the village churches were strengthened by ditches and palisades, and, with a small but determined garrison, showed themselves capable of

proving a troublesome obstacle to the invaders. The peasantry also rallied to the support of the armed forces in such places; and so well planned was the resistance, and so determined the stand made, that, after four months of campaign, Edward had not succeeded in taking a single place of importance.

He had besieged Rheims for seven weeks unsuccessfully, and had been compelled to retire without gaining any advantage. The policy of the Dauphin in strengthening his frontier towns and fortresses had completely defeated the plans of Edward, who had hoped to draw him into the field and meet him in battle, with the expectation of inflicting a crushing defeat by means of his superior forces. The shrewdness of the Dauphin and his counsellors, together with the unexpected resistance on the part of the people, completely frustrated Edward's designs. Another source of disturbance to Edward III. was the naval expedition undertaken by the Dauphin against some of the English ports. The descent upon the port of Winchelsea, and its capture and sack by the French on the 14th of March, 1360, were not calculated to increase his desire to protract his stay in France.

While active operations were in progress near the centre of France, events of importance were occurring upon her frontiers. Edward III. had sent the Duke of Lancaster, as his special representative and lieutenant, into the counties of Perche and Alençon, to secure for him the revenues which he had expected to derive from farming out these provinces to his sub-lieutenants. But these adventurers had

learned to provide for themselves first, and consequently the share of the plunder which came to Edward III. was small. In response to the complaint of the Duke of Lancaster, he sent a knight, in whom he had special confidence, to bring the delinquents to account. Sir William Windsor accordingly landed in Brittany in the spring of 1359, and made his headquarters at Ploermel. His duties compelled him to make frequent visits to neighbouring sections. This fact came to the knowledge of Du Guesclin, who, selecting fifty of his chosen followers, posted them in the vicinity of the French fortress of Saint James de Beuvron, and awaited the approach of Windsor. The plan proved successful. Windsor, travelling with a force in whose numbers he had full confidence, was attacked by Du Guesclin, and his entire escort captured or killed, except a few who escaped through the fleetness of their horses. Du Guesclin conveyed his prisoners to Pontorson, where they were put to ransom. This was a severe check to Edward and his plans, and annoyed him greatly. He accordingly summoned Sir Robert Knolles, who was then laying waste Auvergne, to come immediately into Brittany. This he did so speedily and secretly that his arrival was not discovered by the ever-watchful Du Guesclin. Gathering a force from the English garrisons, he immediately attacked the French. The affair occurred in December, 1359, at the Pas d'Evran, between Becherel and Dinan, on the banks of the Rance.

Du Guesclin had but a small body of troops, and, though surprised and greatly outnumbered, fought

with great fury and persistency. A number of his followers were slain, but he fought on fiercely, regardless of numbers or calls to surrender. The attacking party, however, preferred to capture him and put him to ransom, knowing well that so important a capture was a valuable one. Du Guesclin and Bertrand de Saint-Pern were made prisoners by an English knight, Robin d'Adez, one of those who had taken part in the "Battle of the Thirty."

Du Guesclin was soon at liberty, having been ransomed, and soon had the satisfaction of retaliating upon the English for his recent defeat and capture. Having under his command about two hundred men-at-arms on an expedition, he halted for the night at the Abbey of Saint Meen, between Ploermel and Dinan. He had with him at the abbey forty of his followers, while the remainder were quartered in the houses of the village. The captain of the fortress of Ploermel was an English knight named Richard Grenacre. Upon learning of Du Guesclin's visit, he immediately attacked him with three hundred men.

The followers of Du Guesclin in the village were scattered, and were speedily captured or killed. Aroused by the noise, he had hardly time to arm himself before he rushed out to the attack, at the head of thirty of his followers, shouting his battle-cry, "*Notre Dame, Guesclin!*" So fierce was the onset, that the enemy was soon routed and put to flight, and he recaptured those of his forces who had been made prisoners. Sir Richard Grenacre and one of his sons were taken prisoners, while a second son was killed in the battle.

Du Guesclin led his prisoners to Pontorson, and reported his success to the Dauphin at the time of the opening of the negotiations, which resulted a little later in the treaty of Brétigny.*

After an expedition covering a period of seven months, during which he had gained no material advantage, and had lost a large part of his army and expended a vast amount of treasure, Edward III. signed the treaty of Brétigny on the 8th of May, 1360.

This treaty was of benefit to France, since it settled certain disputes in regard to territory between the two kings, and, although at an exorbitant price of ransom, released John II. from his imprisonment. Besides the great concessions of territory, a sum of three million ecus of gold was demanded by Edward.

Great as was this amount, it was fully a million less than John had himself offered only a year previously. This treaty was ratified at the Tower of London by the two kings on the 14th of the following July. On the 8th of July, 1360, John arrived at Calais, where he remained until October, occupied in arranging for the collection of the sum of money to be paid to Edward III. for his ransom. Before leaving Calais, John was enabled to conclude a treaty with Charles the Bad of Navarre.

One of the provisions of the treaty of Brétigny stipulated, that, within three months after his departure from Calais, he should provide eighty hostages—forty chevaliers and forty burghers—selected from the nineteen chief cities of France. Among the chevaliers were the Ducs d'Orleans and d'Anjou

* Luce, chap. ix., pp. 312–314.

and Pierre d'Alençon. These three princes, before their departure, appointed Du Guesclin lieutenant of their possessions in their absence. This gave him an extensive command in Normandy, Anjou, and Maine, and in the county of Alençon.

By the treaty of Brétigny, Edward had agreed to recall all English troops from those sections to which he had relinquished claim. Many of these garrisons, being composed of soldiers of fortune, found their occupation ended by the treaty of peace. They were slow, therefore, and in many cases refused to leave those positions where they had made an easy and profitable living by levying upon the surrounding country. Edward III. accordingly directed Sir Thomas Holland, who had been his lieutenant in Brittany, and captain of Saint-Sauveur in lower Normandy, to secure the promised withdrawal. His death at Rouen, soon after he entered upon this mission, left the attempt without result.

In many sections strong castles were held by the Free Companies, and were a source of constant menace to the surrounding country. Against these, in the county of Maine, Du Guesclin entered upon a vigorous campaign. He took by assault Sablé, Saint Brice, and other places held by the Free Companies, and placed strong garrisons in those already French.

These continued successes were interrupted by an event which for a time placed Du Guesclin in a condition under which his active spirit was restless. During the latter part of December, 1360, or in January, 1361 (the exact date is uncertain *), as he

* Luce, p. 249.

was returning from an expedition to the banks of the Flêche, and was about to cross the Sarthe, he was met by Sir Hugh Calverly, an English free-booter, who was lying in wait for him with a strong force at the bridge of Juigné. The French succeeded in crossing, in spite of a furious resistance, but, after having done so, were attacked in flank and rear by a body of English archers, while their whole force was closely engaged. This diversion caused the retreat of Sir William de Craon and eighty men-at-arms. This defection, at a critical moment, was fatal. Du Guesclin, supported by his bravest chevaliers, made herculean efforts to regain the advantage which had nearly given them the victory, but it was useless. Pressed and surrounded on every side, he was compelled to surrender to Sir Hugh Calverly.

The ransom demanded by Calverly for his important prisoner was three thousand ecus. Du Guesclin immediately undertook to raise this sum and obtain his release. Leaving his brother Guillaume as a hostage, he hastened to Paris. Here he met John II., who promised to furnish him a large part of the sum demanded. This he proposed to raise upon the possessions of the Duc d'Orléans, the Duc d'Anjou, and the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel.

The Ducs d'Orléans and d'Anjou were then in England as hostages for the payment of the ransom of John himself, and hence it became necessary for Du Guesclin to visit London and obtain their consent to the levy proposed by John upon their lands.

Accordingly in the spring of 1361 he visited London, and the desired consent was gained, since, in their enforced absence from their domains and

possessions, it was necessary that their skilful lieutenant should be free to protect their territory. Accordingly, by act signed at Compiègne, on the 14th of June, 1361, John directed his royal treasurers to pay the sum he had promised.* By his own efforts and the aid of his friends, du Guesclin was enabled to secure the entire amount of the ransom demanded during the summer, and by October 18th had discharged his obligation and resumed his active service.

Shortly after the death of Sir Thomas Holland, Edward III. appointed Sir John Chandos, his captain-general in France. To him he specially intrusted the duty of securing the evacuation of the fortresses which, by the provisions of the recent treaty, he had relinquished to the King of France. Sir John Chandos immediately proceeded to Paris to secure the possession of those provinces which the treaty had ceded to Edward III. John II., aware of his mission, and reluctant to consummate the great sacrifice of territory, avoided the English envoy by going to the fortress of Melun. Sir John, however, followed him; and, in order to delay the meeting, John II. again moved his abiding-place, and took refuge in the Abbey of Barbeau.

The interview was inevitable, and John was compelled to meet it. He was able to plead further delay, on account of the continued occupation of certain fortresses by English garrisons and the continued depredations in many sections by Anglo-Gascon Free Companies.

Impatient at the failure of Edward III. to relieve

* Biblioth. Nationale, Dept. MSS., "Guesclin," Luce, p. 351.

him of the evils of which he complained, John determined to take matters into his own hands, and accordingly, in the latter months of 1361, raised a force for a campaign against the English Free Companies. In the hands of Du Guesclin he placed the sum of eight thousand livres, with which to recruit a force of men-at-arms and archers.*

An expedition was placed under the command of the Constable of France, Sir Robert de Fiennes; and with him were associated the Comtes d'Artois, d'Alençon, and d'Eu, and Baudoin d'Annequin, captain of the cross-bows, the old friend of Du Guesclin. The object of the expedition was the capture of the strong fortress of Brezolles. This was held by a mixed garrison, formerly English and Gascon mercenaries, which had for some time held it as a rallying-point, from which incursions were made into the surrounding fertile country of La Perche. This fortress was situated near the town of Dreux, and upon this place the move was first made.

Du Guesclin, in the meantime, had gone to Pontorson to muster his force of men-at-arms. This accomplished, he immediately started to effect a junction with the forces of the Constable de Fiennes. On his route to Brezolles he learned of the muster of a number of the English Companies in preparation for an expedition for plunder and pillage. These bodies of Free Companies were gathered at Briouze, a large town, whose defences had been levelled. He immediately moved upon this force with the utmost speed and secrecy, and struck them

* Biblioth. Nationale, MS., title "Du Guesclin," Luce, p. 254.

so fiercely and unexpectedly that he captured one hundred of their number, among whom was their captain, Hoppequin Dièrre.*

After this success he joined the forces of the Constable de Fiennes at Tillièrs, north of Brezolles, where he, with Baudoin d'Annequin, held his headquarters. For three months the fortress of Brezolles was closely besieged, at the end of which time the garrison capitulated, on condition that they might be allowed to march out free, leaving the stronghold in possession of the besiegers.

Following this, was the surrender of Fresnay le Samson, in the county of Alençon, and the occupation of the tower of Pirmil, in Maine, which was carried by assault by Sir Amauri de Craon. These events closed this successful campaign.

John II. having been called into Burgundy (to which duchy he had fallen heir by the death of Philippe de Rouvière, the late Duke), the Dauphin Charles assumed direction of affairs. He summoned Du Guesclin to Paris, and placed in his hands a sum for the payment of his troops, as well as to compensate him for his own expenses. In appreciation of his valuable services, he granted to him the Château de Roche-Tesson, in lower Normandy. This important stronghold commanded the principal route from Normandy into Brittany by Bayeux and Rennes. It was a point from which the incursions of the Navarrese into lower Normandy could be controlled.

This added dignity raised him from the rank of chevalier to that of "chevalier banneret," and at

* Biblioth. Nationale, MS. 4987, etc., Luce, p. 355.

the same time conferred upon him the title of "Counsellor to the King." The Dauphin also intrusted to him the charge of the château and Breton-French garrison of Torigni, which commanded the course of the Vire, and, with Roche-Tesson, controlled the route of communication by Vire between Cotentin and Brittany.

Early in January, 1362, he took possession of his new commands. Stopping briefly at Pontorson, he set out for Rouen in order to join the Constable de Fiennes, and plan with him a campaign against the Anglo-Navarrese Free Companies in that section.

At the head of a force of four hundred men-at-arms and archers, he was traversing the section in which these bands of marauders were operating, when he learned that a body of six hundred of their number was not far from Saint-Guillaume de Mortain. By a rapid march, he succeeded in surprising and attacking them, and completely routed the force, capturing one hundred prisoners, and leaving an equal number slain upon the field.

Effecting a junction with the forces of the Constable, immediately afterward they together attacked the fortified abbey of Saint Martin de Séez. This was held by a strong garrison of English troops from several of the neighbouring castles, which had been evacuated by them. The abbey was closely invested, and the garrison, confident in their strength, attempted a sortie, which was repulsed after a sanguinary struggle in which they lost a large number in killed and prisoners. The garrison soon afterward surrendered, on condition of securing life and freedom. The Constable de Fiennes and Du Guesclin

immediately proceeded to besiege Vignée, a fortress held by the English. An assault which was attempted failed, and at the same time they received information which led them to raise the siege. They learned that James Pipe, who had previously evacuated the stronghold of Rupierre, near Caen, had seized the Abbey de Cormeilles, and was laying the adjacent country under tribute. Pipe had strengthened the defences of the abbey to a degree which demanded a siege by the French forces.

While these affairs were transpiring, the valley of the Rhone was the scene of a series of events which deeply affected the welfare of France. Two English soldiers of fortune, James Hawkins and James Cressway, with two Gascon leaders of Free Companies, Sequin de Badefol and Robert Briquet, had succeeded, in a night attack on the 28th of December, 1360, in taking the fortress of Pont Saint Esprit.

The castle was bravely defended by its seneschal, Jean Souvain, who was mortally wounded in falling from the battlements during the assault. Once masters of this commanding fortress, the Free Companies committed the worst atrocities upon the inhabitants of the surrounding country. The Pope, Innocent VI., after vain remonstrances with them, began a crusade against them. This was pursued until the summer of 1361, when he was compelled to pay to the bandits a considerable sum, in order to protect his patrimony from their incursions. For four years Innocent VI. pursued a hopeless struggle against them, until the signing of the treaty of Brétigny by the Kings of England and France.

This treaty served to increase the ranks of the Free Companies by releasing from their engagement large numbers of mercenary troops, who had been in the employment of Edward III. These bodies of men-at-arms felt that the Pope, as the negotiator of this treaty, had destroyed their occupation, and hence that they would turn their forces against him.

Although Edward III. had sent Sir John Chandos to secure the delivery of the fortresses which he had promised to yield to John II., and to dispose these disorderly garrisons, the task was difficult of accomplishment. The several bodies of Free Companies were receiving constant additions of men-at-arms, whose occupation was gone, for the time at least.

The Dauphin Charles, with much sagacity, recognised the existing conditon, and endeavoured to meet it. In the latter part of March, 1362, the Comte de Tancarville, his lieutenant in Bourgogne, was directed to take his entire force and march against the Free Companies in the valley of the Rhone. With him were associated the Comte de la Marche and his two sons, Pierre and Louis de Bourbon, and other illustrious chevaliers. The two forces met not far from Lyons, at Brignais, on the 6th of April, 1362.

The outcome was a disastrous defeat for the French forces. This result was due to the fact that the French chivalry was opposed by men-of-war trained by long habits of discipline and hardship.

The brilliant courage of the French was no match for the veteran discipline of the rough soldiers of

the Free Companies. Louis de Bourbon was slain upon the field, the Comte de la Marche and Pierre de Bourbon were made prisoners, and the Comte de Tancarville and other chevaliers died of their wounds at Lyons a few days later.

The victory of the Free Companies at Brignais caused much consternation at Avignon. The Pope, in his terror, called upon the King of France for aid, and, as a consideration for his assistance, made a large loan to John II. toward the payment of that instalment of his ransom which fell due in April, 1362.

John immediately recalled the Constable de Fiennes to Paris, where he received instruction to proceed into Bourgogne and assume command of further operations against the Free Companies. This left Du Guesclin in command of the forces besieging Cormeilles. The prolonged resistance of the garrison exhausted his patience, and he accordingly addressed a letter to James Pipe, the commander, couched in the most threatening terms. This had the desired effect. The garrison, knowing well that Du Guesclin would make severe terms with them if forced to carry the place by assault, agreed to surrender upon conditions which placed the fortress in his hands some time during the month of August.

At the time of his withdrawal from this section, he learned that Sir John Jouel, at the head of a body of Free Companies, had left the garrison of Livarot, and was pillaging the country north of Liseux. He immediately started in pursuit of this force, which he overtook beyond Pont l'Evêque.

He attacked them at the pass of Breuil, killed a part of their number, and compelled Jouel to retreat.

Although France and Brittany had been in a condition of more or less constant disturbance and strife during the fourteenth century, there was nothing which produced such widespread misery and distress as the lawless incursions of the Free Companies. Composed of men-at-arms under able leaders, and inured to hardship and war, they, during a period of nine years, spread dismay and devastation over all parts of France by their acts of violence and brigandage.

Nothing was exempt from their ravages; and all orders, without distinction, suffered from their exactions. Their rise was most signal after the disaster at Poitiers, when large numbers of English mercenaries were freed from employment, and rapidly scattered themselves over many portions of France.

The first leader of these bands to obtain prominence was Sir Regnault de Cervole, a Gascon, under whose command a considerable force of men-at-arms had gathered. He was usually designated the "Arch-Priest," which title he obtained from the fact that, though a layman, he held an arch-priesthood. He appears in 1357 as the leader of a large band of soldiery of the most lawless character, and Froissart * describes their first incursions as extending into Provençe and as far as Avignon. He continued his career of brigandage until 1365, when he fell by the hands of his own followers.

From Poitiers in 1356, until their victory at Brignais in 1362, the numbers of the Free Companies

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., chap. lx., p. 373.

had rapidly increased, and their atrocities upon the people of those portions of the country which they pillaged and ravaged had augmented in similar proportions.

During the events of the two years just related, Du Guesclin was occupied in his command in Maine, Anjou, Perche, and Normandy, in a war upon this banditti. His activity was incessant, and his success correspondingly marked. The period was filled with a rapid succession of captures of castles held by garrisons of the Free Companies, with conflicts with bodies of their pillagers, and with successes in driving them beyond the limits of his command. Such were the results achieved, that the people of the territory which he freed from their ravages viewed him with affectionate admiration as their deliverer and defender.

This terrible affliction of France by the Free Companies can be traced, in its development, to the policy of Edward III. after the invasion of 1346 and its success at Crécy. While the results of this invasion were brilliant, on account of the achievements of his arms, the immense expense which it had entailed had completely emptied his treasury. Unable to carry the war into Brittany as he desired, he had espoused the cause of John de Montfort. In order to avoid any expense on his own part in these efforts, he conceived the idea of farming out the province as though it were his own, and placing some one over it as a military governor, who should collect from it a revenue, and thus meet all outlay for the support and maintenance of its troops and garrisons.

The results of such a system are apparent. There grew up on every side castles and fortresses which

were not for the public defence, but were centres of brigandage, rapine, and oppression. Into these strongholds were gathered bodies of lawless men, who were willing to promise to pay a portion of the plunder which they might secure, for a flimsy pretence of right to carry on their practices, and whose numbers would be rapidly swelled by the addition of adventurers like themselves.

CHAPTER VII.

CAMPAIGN IN NORMANDY, AND JOHN II.

1362–1364.

His campaign against Charles the Bad—Siege of Becquerel—Treaty of Poitiers—Marriage of Du Guesclin with Tiphaine Raguenel—Affair with Sir William Felton—Campaign against the Anglo-Navarrese—Capture of Mantes and Meulan—Capture of Rolleboise—Death of John II.—His character.

DURING his brief pontificate, Innocent VI. had striven to secure peace between the Kings of England and France. His efforts to secure the termination of the struggle in Brittany, which had proved only partially successful before, were more earnestly pressed after the peace of Brétigny. These were without effect, and were terminated by his death, which occurred on the 12th of September, 1362, at Avignon.

The truce which had been signed between the two contestants in 1360, and had been extended further by a later agreement, finally terminated by act of the opposing parties in the latter part of 1362. John de Montfort had attained his majority, and had come into possession of his estates. He was thus no longer the ward of Edward III. Of the

various fortresses and strongholds which Edward III. had held in the name of De Montfort, he relinquished all except those of Becherel and Trogoff, which he retained as a compensation for his services as guardian. These he placed in charge of his lieutenant-general, in Brittany, William Lattimer.

The exact date of the resumption of hostilities is uncertain*; but the conduct of affairs in behalf of Charles de Blois was intrusted to Du Guesclin, and in the latter months of 1362 we find him occupied in military operations connected with this struggle. Early in the spring of 1363 he pushed a campaign into Normandy, surprising his antagonists by a series of rapid marches and sudden attacks, for which he was so famous. Moving from east to west, he took successively Pestivieu, Trogoff, and Carhaix, and also occupied Saint Pol de Leon.

John II. had left Paris in the month of September, 1362, and soon after the coronation of Urban V. had repaired to Avignon, where he had spent the greater part of the following winter. Here he became aware that the mandate of evacuation, issued by Edward III. in that winter, would be tardily obeyed by the captains of the fortresses ceded by him to the King of France. The Dauphin Charles, who had charge of the affairs of government in the absence of his father, summoned Du Guesclin in April, 1363, to take charge of the Crown interests. He was also lieutenant of the Duc d'Orléans for his extensive possessions, and was now made captain-general for the Dauphin in the bailiwicks of Cotentin and Caen.

* Luce, p. 378.

Of the strong positions held by the French in lower Normandy, the fortress of Torigny was one of the most important. It was situated in the neighbourhood of several Anglo-Navarrese strongholds, whose garrisons were constantly making forays into its vicinity, and threatening it with direct attack.

From its situation it commanded the valley of Vire, and it was very important that it should remain in French possession, and be relieved from the incessant attacks of the Free Companies, especially the garrison of the neighbouring castles of Aulnay and Vaudry.

In this section Charles the Bad of Navarre had appointed as his lieutenant his brother, Philippe de Navarre, Comte de Longueville, who was as honourable and noble as his brother Charles was treacherous and base. He had for a long period been devoted to the cause of Edward III., but had finally withdrawn his allegiance, and returned to that of his proper sovereign, John II. He readily joined in the plans of Du Guesclin to rid this section of its troublesome neighbours, and to secure to the King of France the strongholds which had been taken by the Free Companies.

In the latter part of April, Du Guesclin, with the aid of Philippe, undertook an expedition against the fortress of Aulnay. The Comte de Longueville had sent Guillaume du Guesclin, brother of Bertrand, to summon to his aid many of the knights of the Navarrese fortresses in Normandy.

The surrender of Aulnay was arranged by purchase. Immediately the conjoined forces of Du Guesclin and the Comte de Longueville moved

against Vaudry. An assault was made, which failed after a most vigorous effort, with considerable loss to the besiegers. The forces of Du Guesclin and his ally amounted to eight hundred men-at-arms. The commander of the garrison, knowing the determined valour of Du Guesclin, and realising his strength, did not dare to await a second assault, but withdrew with his garrison, leaving the fortress in the hands of the besiegers. In the meantime, the Comte de Longueville had succeeded in driving out several strong bodies of Free Companies from Cotigny and Coulonces.

While Du Guesclin was pushing his conquests in lower Normandy, Charles de Blois, encouraged by the successes of the opening of the campaign, prepared to besiege the fortress of Becherel. This stronghold Edward III. had reserved for himself as payment for the sum of sixty-four thousand nobles which he had lent to the Comte de Montfort while he was acting as his guardian. The possession of this fortress, situated on the main route between Rennes and Dinan, was of much importance, and accordingly, Charles de Blois laid siege to it in the latter part of May, 1363.

The small army which he had assembled was considerably reënforced by the Dauphin Charles, who directed Sir Amauri de Craon, his lieutenant in Maine, Anjou, and Touraine, to join him with the forces under his command.

John de Montfort, aware of these movements, endeavoured to take advantage of them. With a considerable force and several skilful English leaders, among whom were Sir John Chandos, Sir Robert

Knolles, Sir Gautier Hewet, and others, as well as such renowned Breton knights as Sir Olivier de Clisson and Olivier Cadoudal, he attempted, in the absence of the forces of Charles de Blois, to surprise the city of Nantes. This effort, made on the 25th of June, failed, and without further delay he proceeded to the aid of the beleaguered garrison of Becquerel.

On reaching the vicinity of this fortress, he found the troops of Charles de Blois in so well secured a position that he did not deem it safe to attack them. He accordingly decided to so dispose his force as to cut off their sources of supply. This he did; and the forces of De Blois, suffering from the inconveniences of their critical position, proposed to meet the forces of De Montfort in the field. This proposition was accepted by De Montfort; but, before the battle opened, a truce was arranged through the intervention of the bishops present.

This was agreed upon on the 12th of July. By the negotiations which followed, a suspension of arms, and a provision for the conduct of further negotiation, were arranged, under the supervision of the Prince of Wales as referee. Each party gave hostages until a treaty should be duly drawn and signed.

Negotiations progressed slowly and with difficulty, and it was not until November 26, 1362, that the treaty was signed at Poitiers. This treaty provided for a suspension of hostilities until March 24, 1364.

In the latter part of 1363, hostilities having reopened between the Dauphin Charles and Charles

the Bad of Navarre, John de Montfort sought occasion to recommence hostilities against Charles de Blois. Feeling that the Dauphin was fully occupied with his operations against Charles the Bad, and sure of the open assistance of the latter as well as the secret aid of the English, he decided that it was a time to disregard further efforts at peace with Charles de Blois, and to open hostilities against him.

In the arrangements for the truce and suspension of arms at Poitiers, in November, 1363, Du Guesclin had been included in the number of hostages given by Charles de Blois. He had accepted this position of hostage with the understanding that it was to be for a limited time only. This had been acceded to by De Montfort, and by him he was assigned to the guardianship of Sir Thomas Knolles, who duly acquitted him after the term agreed upon had expired. His duties in Normandy had been the reason of his stipulating a limit; and, his term completed, he repaired to Vitré, whence he proceeded to Dinan, in order to consummate one of the most important acts of his eventful life.

The admiration which his prowess in the tournament at Dinan had won from Tiphaine Raguenel had ripened into a deeper sentiment. She had followed his continued successes with increasing interest. She was the descendant of a family which was ardently loyal to the cause of Charles de Blois, and his misfortunes had only served to deepen her enthusiasm in all that pertained to it. Du Guesclin had early committed himself to the decision that Charles de Blois was the rightful successor to the

sovereignty of the duchy of Brittany. This fact undoubtedly gained for him further favour in the eyes of "The Fair Maid of Dinan." His unremitting loyalty to the cause, after defeat and misfortune, united a chivalrous devotion to conspicuous bravery and prowess. These characteristics, with others which belonged to a generous and kindly nature, transformed the plain features of Du Guesclin, under the romantic imagination which Tiphaine possessed, into those of an ideal, and she gave her heart and hand to the Breton hero.

Charles de Blois readily consented to a union which would combine two strong elements of support so important for his cause. The marriage was solemnised at Dinan.*

Du Guesclin did not, however, remain inactive. The disturbances in other portions of France appealed to his active spirit, and seconded by his brave wife, who appreciated in its fulness the great work which he had begun, and believed that he was destined to accomplish the deliverance of France from her enemies, he again put on his armour, and left the quiet of home for the stern duties of the field. Tiphaine was a true representative of the noble women of her time, and did not hesitate a moment to make any sacrifice for the welfare of France and the cause to which she was devoted. With an unbounded admiration for his genius, and the fullest confidence in his success, she could not do otherwise than urge him to assume his place as a leader in the important struggles of the time.

While these events were passing, an incident took

* Cuvelhier, v. 3435.

place which was the cause of extreme annoyance to Du Guesclin. In the articles of the truce of November, 1363, he had been named one of the hostages of Charles de Blois, which office he had accepted for a limited period. This he had faithfully kept. He was, however, charged with failure to keep his agreement by Sir William Felton, an English knight, who, on the part of John de Montfort, had aided in drawing up the articles of truce. As soon as Du Guesclin heard of this charge, he sent his squire, Jean de Bigot, to Sir William Felton with the message, that if anyone charged him with having broken his word, and not keeping his engagements, as he had promised to do, he was ready to meet the charge in judicial combat. To this message Sir William Felton sent the following letter*:

Monseigneur Bertrand du Guesclin: I have heard from Jean Bigot, your squire, that you have said, or should have said, that if anyone wished to claim that you had not well and loyally remained a hostage, under the treaty of peace for Brittany, as you have promised to do the day that Monseigneur de Montfort, Duc de Bretagne, and Monseigneur Charles de Blois attempted to settle the dispute regarding Brittany, and that you were held to remain as a hostage for more than one month, you were ready to defend yourself before your judges. Whereupon, I would have you know that you promised upon that day, by the faith of your body, to constitute yourself a hostage and to remain at the residence assigned to you, without departing therefrom, until the city of Nantes should be delivered up to Monseigneur de Mont-

* Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, vol. i., col. 1568–1569; Luce, *Vie de Bert. du Gues.*, p. 402.

fort, Duc de Bretagne, or you should receive permission of my lord; which promise you have broken; far from keeping it well and loyally. And, with the aid of God, I am ready to prove it against you with my own body, as a chevalier should do, before my lord the King of France. Witness my seal affixed to this schedule on the 24th of November, 1363.

GUILLAUME DE FELTON.

To this Du Guesclin sent the following reply:

To Monseigneur Guillaume de Felton: I inform you that, with the aid of God, I will appear before our lord, the King of France on Tuesday before mid-lent next, if he is then in his kingdom. And, in case he should not be, I will, by the aid of God, appear before my lord the Duc de Normandie the said day. And, as for what you say, or have said, that I should have remained a hostage for more than one month until the city of Nantes was delivered over to the Comte de Montfort, and that I have broken my promise; in case that you desire to hold the contrary against me, I will say and maintain, before the King or the Duke, in my loyal defence, that you have basely lied. I will be at the appointed place, if it please God, there to guard and defend my honour and estate against you. And, as I do not desire to be long in discussion with you, I inform you once for all, by these letters sealed with my seal on the 9th of December, 1363.

BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN.

Olivier de Mauny, Du Guesclin's cousin, and one of his oldest friends in arms, showed his affection for him by challenging any friend of Felton or De Montfort who desired to take the part of the Eng-

lish knight. His challenge was accepted on the 15th of February, 1364, by Sir Thomas Felton, a cousin of the accuser of Du Guesclin.

As John had been compelled to return to England and into captivity, the Dauphin Charles was at the head of the affairs of the government; and before him the discussion and settlement of this affair naturally came. Fully realising its importance, and desiring that his esteemed commander should have the fullest opportunity for vindication, he accordingly assembled the members of his council in a solemn convocation at Paris upon the day appointed, the 27th of February, 1364, and presided in person over its deliberations. There were present, and formed part of the council, the King of Cyprus and the élite of the barons, chevaliers, and church dignitaries of the realm. The discussion between the advocates of the two parties continued for three days; and on Thursday, February 29th, the Court rendered its decision, which was in substance as follows: that the law only permitted duels in default of testimonial proof; that Du Guesclin had declared, in the presence of more than two hundred chevaliers and squires, that he could remain as a hostage but one month; that he had kept his promise, as many witnesses had testified on the part of Sir Robert Knolles; finally, that Sir William Felton could not call Du Guesclin to a duel to prove a matter already witnessed by more than two hundred persons.

Bertrand had demanded by his advocate, as damages for this accusation, the sum of one hundred thousand francs from his accuser. This claim the

Court decided not to allow, in setting aside the complaint of Felton, which it declared baseless and untrue.

The death of Philippe de Rouvère, Duc de Bourgogne, without issue, had left John II., his cousin, who was also grandson of Robert II., the direct heir to the duchy. Charles the Bad, though only the great-grandson of Robert II., at once made claim to the succession of the duchy against John II., who would not listen to the pretensions of his son-in-law. Charles the Bad immediately commenced preparations to open hostilities against the King of France. His brother Philippe, Comte de Longueville, was loyal to his sovereign, John II., but his death at Vernon, on the 29th of August, removed him from a position where he might have done much to thwart the evil purposes of his brother, Charles the Bad.

Edward III. encouraged the hostile movements of Charles the Bad, and countenanced the depredations of the Free Companies in Normandy and other sections. John de Montfort immediately entered upon his own evil purposes against the peace, in conditions so favourable to his designs. Sir John Jouel, a leader of the Free Companies, under the encouragement of Edward III., fortified himself in the Castle of Rolleboise, which commanded the lower Seine, and enabled him to cut off communication between Rouen and Paris. The incursions, of these bandit forces were extended to the environs of Paris, and the intervening country was pillaged and laid under heavy contribution.

The winter of 1363 and 1364 was one of unusual

rigour, and the suffering entailed thereby was very general and severe. The Seine and the Rhone were so deeply frozen as to be crossed by persons upon horseback, and the vines and olive trees were destroyed in many sections.

The severity of the weather could not curb the activity of Du Guesclin's nature, and his iron frame and wonderful endurance were beyond its power of control. In the latter months of 1363 the Anglo-Navarrese troops had invaded the low country about Bayeux, and had put the inhabitants under heavy ransom. They had also taken Beaumont-le-Richard, Quesnay, and Molay.

Against these bandits he organised an expedition with Olivier de Mauny, his cousin, as his lieutenant. The people of Caen contributed a considerable force, and the subjects of the King of France in Normandy also furnished men and material.

In midwinter they besieged Beaumont-le-Richard, Quesnay, and Molay-Bacon. The two former were captured during the latter part of January and early part of February, and Molay-Bacon was surrendered to Olivier de Mauny in the latter part of February, 1364.

The success of this campaign, during one of the severest winters recorded, bears ample testimony to the courage and endurance of the little army which, under the two Breton cousins, formed the nucleus of that force by whose sturdy valour and discipline Du Guesclin had been able to win victory after victory, and which was to insure success later on the field of Cocherel.

Early in March the Dauphin summoned Du Gues-

clin and Olivier de Mauny from lower Normandy, and sent them to besiege the Castle of Rolleboise, which had been a source of terror to the surrounding country during the winter, on account of the depredations and atrocities of its garrison. Among the chevaliers who joined his forces were Jean de Chalons, Comte d'Auxerre, and his brother Hugues.* The Dauphin also directed the principal lords of Normandy and Picardy to join their forces with those of Du Guesclin, who made his headquarters near Mantes.

The town of Mantes, and that of Meulan near it, belonged to Charles the Bad, who, having spent much time at the former, had gathered a number of supporters among the burghers of both towns. In Meulan, especially, he had accumulated considerable stores of plunder and treasure. After March 24th, the first day of Lent, the siege of Rolleboise was undertaken. Its commander made every preparation for its defence.

On the 4th of April the Dauphin commanded the chief of his artillery to convey to Du Guesclin a number of powerful war engines and munitions. As soon as these were received, preparations for a general assault were completed and the attack made. Du Guesclin and the Comte d'Auxerre led the onset upon the bridge, and had nearly succeeded in carrying it and the ramparts, when night closed the contest for the day.

At this point of the siege a messenger arrived with an important communication for Du Guesclin. The Dauphin had learned of the treacherous pre-

* Known as "The Green Knight."

parations and intentions of Charles of Navarre, and that he had already despatched a force into Normandy under command of his cousin Jean Grailly, called also the "Captal de Buch."

The army under Grailly was large and well appointed, and was a menace not to be overlooked. This information had been gained from the capture of a messenger bearing despatches to the lords d'Albret and Mussidan, whom Charles the Bad was seeking to enlist against the King of France.

The Dauphin, with the advice of his council, decided to act promptly in the matter, and to treat the King of Navarre as a rebellious subject, and to confiscate his possessions, thus ignoring the necessity for a formal declaration of hostilities. The Maréchal Boucicaut was therefore sent to Du Guesclin to inform him of the state of affairs, and to instruct him to occupy the towns of Mantes and Meulan immediately, without any formality of siege; in other words, to obtain possession of them by any means which might suggest themselves to him. His ready genius quickly afforded him a plan.

Early on the morning of Sunday, the 7th of April, he placed in ambush, near one of the gates of Mantes, one hundred and twenty chosen men-at-arms, under command of Olivier de Mauny, Jean de Boutellier, and other daring leaders. Awaiting the opening of the barriers before the outer guard had been set, they seized the opportunity, when a loaded waggon was coming out of the gate upon the drawbridge, to take possession of the bridge, and, attacking and overpowering the guard, gained control of the gate, and immediately entered the town. The

inhabitants were stricken with a panic, and fled in all directions. Du Guesclin, who awaited the signal of their success at a distance, now entered the town with his forces. The houses of the wealthy burghers were given up to pillage, though no violence was permitted to be done to the inhabitants.*

Three days later, Du Guesclin, with Jean de Chalons, Comte d'Auxerre, leaving Mantes under guard of Hugues de Chalons, "The Green Knight," and Evan Charruel, pushed rapidly forward at the head of two hundred men-at-arms for Meulan, where many of the fugitives from Mantes had taken refuge.

Du Guesclin at once besieged the town, and planned an assault from the right and left banks of the Seine simultaneously.

The garrison, finding resistance useless, surrendered. Again permission to pillage the houses, sparing the inhabitants, was given. These sequels of a successful siege were common in the lawless period in which the events reviewed took place. It was one of the degrading licenses of the time; and even a brave and generous commander was not above tolerating such practices on the part of his soldiery, in partial compensation for their service and courage.

Du Guesclin, while he ever stood firmly for the protection of women and the helpless at such times, permitted these disgraceful acts of brigandage on some occasions; perhaps yielding to the desires of some of his leaders and unprincipled followers, rather than following the promptings of his better nature.

* Luce, p. 426; Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 472, gives a different version; Cuvelhier, vv. 3698–3868, explains the plan differently.

In the early part of 1364, John II., contrary to the advice of his counsellors, decided to return to England. Not long after his arrival he was taken ill, and died at London upon the 8th of April.

Thus passed away a prince whose reign seems to have been little else than a continuous series of misfortunes and complications for France.

His character was a puzzling combination of inconsistencies. Of fine figure and presence, and courageous in spirit, he still seemed to lack all other characteristics of a military leader. Though open and frank in his manner, he was irritable in temper, and blindly self-willed and obstinate in maintaining his opinions.

CHAPTER VIII.

COCHEREL AND AURAY.

1364–1365.

The Captal de Buch joins Charles the Bad—The battle of Cocherel—Du Guesclin defeats the English and Navarrese—Results of the victory—The Dauphin crowned as Charles V.—Du Guesclin's success in Normandy—He aids Charles de Blois—Death of his father—The battle of Auray—Defeat and death of Charles de Blois—Du Guesclin a prisoner—Treaty of Guérande.

SIR JEAN GRAILLY, the Captal de Buch, was the son of Jean Grailly and Blanche de Foix.* He was a person of pleasing presence and manner, of fine physique, fond of the chase, and very expert in arms. After Poitiers, in which he took part, he spent much time at the court of the Black Prince in Aquitaine.

On his arrival in Normandy, when sent by Edward III. to join Charles the Bad, he immediately began to assemble forces in the vicinity of Evreux. From the neighbouring garrisons and from lower

* The family of Grailly were lords of *la teste de Buch*, and from the Gascon *Cap*, the same as the French *tête*, they took the title "Captal." The family of Grailly, with that of Albret, controlled at this time the greater part of Gascony.

Normandy he gathered a considerable body of troops; while Sir John Jouel, the notorious English freebooter, collected the English men-at-arms of the Free Companies which were in that vicinity, and the Bishop of Avranches summoned such Breton forces as he could control. In a short time a body of nearly seven hundred lances, three hundred archers, and five hundred foot-soldiers, was gathered under his command. The contingent of the Navarrese forces was under the Bascon de Mareuil, one of the dependents of Charles of Navarre.

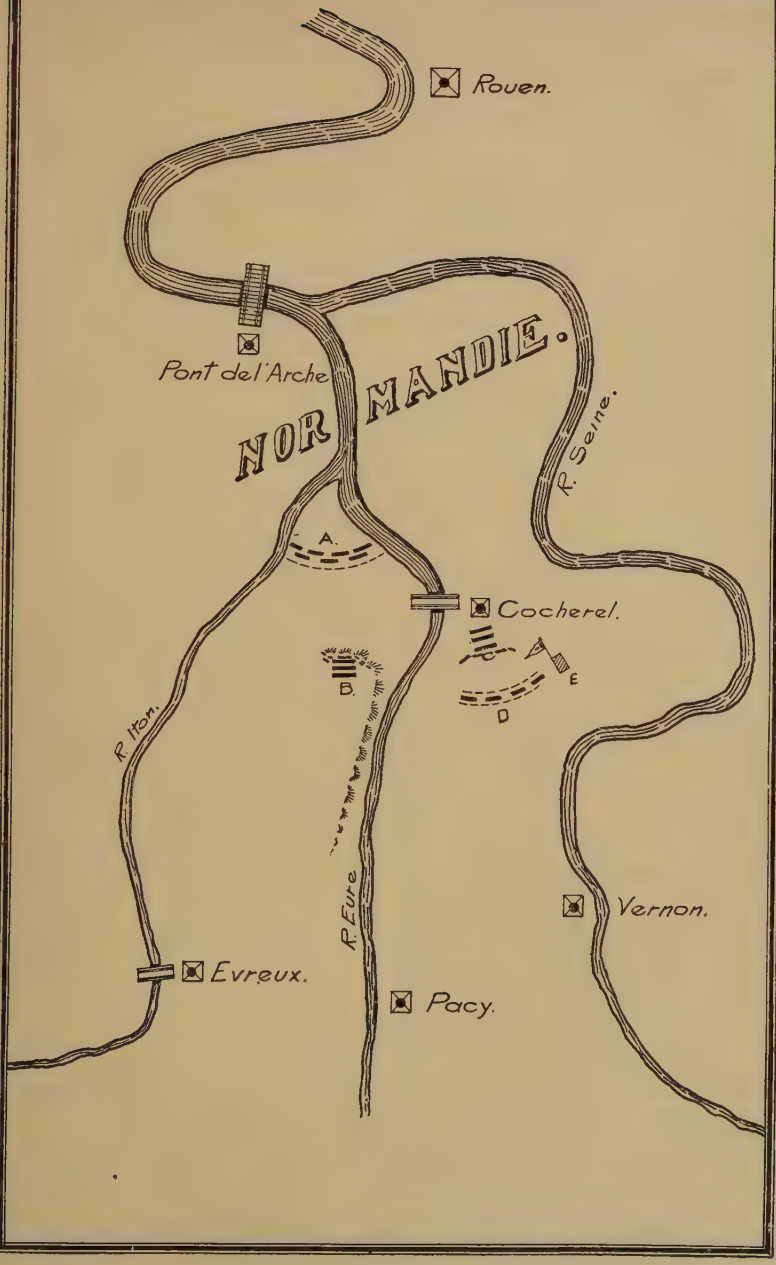
On Tuesday, the 14th of May, the Captal de Buch gathered his forces between Evreux, Pacy, and Vernon. He had been aware that Du Guesclin had been assembling an army in the vicinity of Rouen, and was soon to move forward. In the hope of preventing the French from crossing the Seine, he moved his army on Wednesday, the 15th of May, in the direction of Pont de l'Arche. As they passed beyond Evreux, his scouts encountered an English herald, named Falcon, whom the Captal de Buch had previously known. He demanded of him whence he came, and if he had news of the French. "Yes, in God's name, Monseigneur," replied Falcon. "I came from their camp this morning. They seek you, and desire greatly to find you." "Where are they?" inquired the Captal. "Are they on this side of Pont de l'Arche?" "By my faith, Sire," said Falcon, "they have passed the Pont de l'Arche, and are not far from Pacy." "Tell me, I pray you, good Falcon," the Captal inquired, "how many men have they, and what captains?" "By my faith, Sire, they have fifteen hundred combat-

ants, and all are good soldiers. There are Bertrand du Guesclin, whose Bretons form the largest company, the Comte d'Auxerre, the Vicomte de Beaumont, Louis de Chalons, le Sire de Beaujeu, the master of the cross-bows,* The Arch-Priest,† and the Sire Oudart de Renty. There are also men-at-arms from your own country of Gascony, the people of Lord d'Albret, Petition de Carton, and Perducas d'Albret. There are also Amanien de Pommiers and the Souldich de la Trau.‡ On hearing the name of the Gascons, the Captal was astonished, and with reddenning face, he said, "Falcon, is it true that the Gascons, whose names you have mentioned with those of the people of d'Albret, are there?" "Sire," said the herald, "upon mine oath they are there!" "Ah, well!" exclaimed the Captal angrily, placing his head between his hands, "by Saint Antoine! Gascons will prove themselves against Gascons." After a moment's pause he asked, "And where, then, is the Sire d'Albret?" "Sire," replied Falcon, "he is with the new King who is on his way to Rennes, and who is to be crowned on Sunday next." The Captal said hastily, "Falcon, if God and Saint George aid us, I will be able to take them before their coronation." A herald from The Arch-Priest at this time desired to be heard; but the Captal de Buch declined to receive him, and said to Sir John Jouel, "The Arch-Priest is such a traitor, that, if he sends a herald to us here,

* Sir Baudoin d'Annequin.

† Arnaud de Cervolle, called "The Arch-Priest," since, with his temporal title, he enjoyed the rights of Arch-Priest of Vannes, in the diocese of Perigoux.

‡ *Souldich* was a title equivalent to *patron*.



BATTLE OF COCHEREL. MAY 16, 1364.

A Du Guesclin's First Position.
B. The Captal de Buch's First Position.
C. The Captal de Buch's Second Position.
D. Du Guesclin's Second Position.
E. Du Guesclin's Cavalry Reserve.

it is to learn the number of our forces. I shall pay no attention to his message."

The two armies approached within a short distance of each other, and took up positions. The Captal de Buch, not knowing whether Du Guesclin threatened Evreux, Pacy, or Vernon, drew up his forces at a point from which he could easily move to the assistance of each place. He selected an eminence with precipitous sides, upon the bank of the river Eure, near a bridge communicating with the two branches of an old route to Vernon and Evreux. To the commandant of the latter place he sent for reënforcements, and received one hundred and twenty soldiers, hired among the young men of the village.

Du Guesclin was none the less cautious and judicious in selecting a position. He kept well informed of the movements of the English and Navarrese forces, and learned that they were drawn up upon the hill of Cocherel, to await his coming. He accordingly extended the left of his line to the Abbey of Croix Saint Leufroy, and rested his right on the bank of the Iton, a tributary of the Eure, and encamped his forces between the two streams. On the following morning, Thursday, the 16th of May, the Captal de Buch, evidently remembering the formation of the English forces at the battle of Poitiers, drew up his army in a similar manner, with two wings of foot-soldiers and archers supported by dismounted men-at-arms, whose horses were in readiness for use, while protected by the waggons and baggage and a wood in their rear. He divided his forces into three nearly equal divisions. The first,

consisting mainly of archers, was under command of Sir John Jouel; the second was commanded by himself, and consisted of Norman gentlemen and the partisans of the King of Navarre; while the third, composed of the mercenaries and the Navarrese contingent, was under command of the Bascon de Mereuil. The three divisions were drawn up at a short distance from each other in front of the hill. He planted his banner at his right in full view of the field, in the centre of a thicket of hawthorn, with sixty men-at-arms to guard it, that it might serve as a rallying-point in the confusion of action.

While these dispositions were being made, a council of the leaders of the French forces was held, to arrange the plan of attack and to choose a leader. The Comte d'Auxerre was asked to take command, but declined, saying, that, while ready to risk all in the combat himself, with leaders so able as Du Guesclin, and experienced in so many battles, he considered that the best chevaliers in the army should be chosen to lead.

Du Guesclin was unanimously chosen, and they adopted as their cry "*Notre Dame! Guesclin!*" No sooner was he placed in command, than he took possession of the bridge of Cocherel, and moved his army from the left to the right bank of the Eure. His troops were drawn up in three columns, commanded respectively by himself, the Comte d'Auxerre, and Sir Louis de Chalons. A body of two hundred Breton and Gascon mounted men-at-arms was held in reserve, under Sir Eustace de la Hussoie.

The Captal de Buch was unwilling to leave his strong position and move to the attack; while Du

Guesclin, avoiding the fatal error of John II. at Poitiers, in attacking his enemy in an almost impregnable position, sought to draw him from it. This he was unable to do, and, after two days' waiting, attempted by a ruse to induce him to leave it. Ordering his army to take its baggage and cross the bridge, he drew away from the river on the opposite side. The ruse succeeded. Sir John Jouel, seeing the French troops crossing to the other side and apparently retreating, hastened to the Captal de Buch, and said, "Sire, do you not see that the French are fleeing. Let us follow them." The Captal de Buch was also deceived, and declined to accept the counsel of one of his experienced men-at-arms, who urged that it was but a ruse to draw him from his position. He immediately gave orders to follow the French forces. Du Guesclin watched his approach until he had advanced sufficiently far, when he ordered his army to face about and form in line of battle. The Captal de Buch was thus deprived of his advantage of position, and was compelled to fight in the open field.

The attack was promptly made, and the battle raged with great-fury; the war-cry of the English and Navarrese, "*St. George! Navarre!*" mingling with that of the French, "*Notre Dame! Guesclin!*"

The Captal de Buch maintained his ground for hours, though hard pressed by Du Guesclin, until the body of mounted men-at-arms, which Du Guesclin had held in reserve for the purpose, was ordered to attack his flank and rear. This movement, executed with great skill by Sir Eustace de la Houssoie, was irresistible, and, pressed in front and rear, the

forces of the Captal de Buch were thrown into confusion. A large number were slain, and the remainder compelled to surrender or take to flight. Their leader, with barely fifty men-at-arms around him, struggled to the last, but was forced to yield himself a prisoner to a Breton squire named Roland Bodin. His loss amounted to not less than eight hundred combatants, slain and made prisoners, among those killed being Sir John Jouel and the Bascon de Mereuil. The French lost between thirty and forty chevaliers and squires in killed, among whom were the Vicomte de Beaumont, Sir Baudoin d'Annequin (master of the cross-bows), Jean de Bethincourt, and Lord de Villequier.*

The Arch-Priest had withdrawn with his followers to the Pont de l'Arche at the commencement of the battle, under pretence of assisting the French at any point hard pressed. In reality he was a treacherous ally, and his action was governed by an intention to throw his fortune with the victorious party.

Immediately after the victory at Cocherel, Du Guesclin learned of the approach of a body of Navarrese consisting of one hundred and twenty lances, led by a squire from Nonancourt, near Pacy. He immediately attacked them, and by a well executed movement completely surrounded them; and in the struggle which followed a large number were slain, and the remnant taken prisoners.

With his prisoners he went first to Pont de l'Arche, and later to Rouen. As Charles the Dauphin was to be crowned king at Rheims on Sunday, the 19th

* Luce, *Hist. de Bert. du Guesclin*, p. 451, ref. Bibl. Nationale MS. fr. No. 4987, fo. 90 v.

of May, three days after the victory just won, Du Guesclin was anxious to communicate the news of so important a success. He accordingly despatched Thibaud de la Rivière, one of his own company of Bretons, and a sergeant-at-arms of the King, Thomas Lalemant, to convey the tidings. Charles was resting at the abbey of Saint Mard de Soissons on the evening of the 18th of May, the day previous to his coronation, when he received the messengers of Du Guesclin. It was a most encouraging piece of intelligence. He was crowned king as Charles V., at Rheims, and entered earnestly into the duties which devolved upon him. He had received a stern training during the previous ten years, which had fitted him in many respects for his arduous task. He was now in his twenty-eighth year. Impressive in figure and stature, he was quiet in manner, self-possessed, and thoughtful. His face was pleasing, and his brown eyes expressive. His habits of life were temperate. Possessing no military talent or fondness for the field, it was said that after the battle of Poitiers, in which he took part, he never again put on his armour. In the conduct of his military affairs he was guided by the advice of those whom he placed in command, and whom he chose on account of well-recognised military talents.

After his coronation he returned to Paris, and, with his council, reviewed the condition of affairs. Summoning Du Guesclin for a conference, he showed his appreciation of his services in his recent victories, and especially of the important event of Cocherel, by investing him, on the 27th of May, with the rich county of Longueville, and title of "Comte de

Longueville." He also constituted him Maréchal of the duchy of Normandy. Of the prisoners taken at Cocherel, the most important were placed by Du Guesclin in the hands of the King.

The Captal de Buch was sent to Meaux, and others elsewhere, for safe keeping. Pierre de Sequainville, being a subject of the King of France, was beheaded for treason.

Charles V., having learned of the extensive ravages of the Free Companies in Normandy, and by the garrisons of those castles which were held by the sympathisers of Charles of Navarre, sent the Duc de Bourgogne, his brother, with a considerable force to quiet these disturbances and punish the perpetrators of the outrages. Dividing his forces into three divisions, he took command of the first; while the second was placed under Sir Jean de la Rivière; and to Du Guesclin was assigned the third division, which consisted principally of the troops which he had commanded at Cocherel. Du Guesclin moved forward toward the frontier, which it was his duty to watch. He prepared to lay siege to Valougnes, but, before reaching the town, was attacked in ambush by a force under Sir Guillaume Boitel. He defeated the attacking party; one hundred and forty of their number being slain, and the remnant taking refuge in the town of Valougnes. The inhabitants were so terrified at his approach, that they made but a slight resistance until he reached the donjon, which consisted of a very strong tower.

Its garrison resisted all attempts to carry it by assault. Du Guesclin's endeavor to effect a breach

CHARLES V. (LE SAGE)

by engines casting heavy stones failed, as did his effort at mining, since the castle was built upon a foundation of rock. A desperate assault also failed, but Du Guesclin notified the governor that he would not leave the castle until he had taken it. The castellan, knowing his determination, and fearing as to the result, should he compel Du Guesclin to carry out his threat, offered to surrender the castle on consideration of the payment of a sum of money. This Du Guesclin declined, and assured him that he would take it without paying a single denier. The castellan then proposed to surrender, on condition that the lives and property of the garrison should be spared. This was accepted, and the garrison evacuated the castle on the following day. While the siege of Valougnes was progressing, Carentan was besieged and taken by Sir Walter de Mauny. After the fall of Valougnes, Du Guesclin besieged Pont de Doune, a strongly fortified town. A violent assault was unsuccessful. The town was defended by an English knight of much experience and skill, Sir Hugh Calverly. Du Guesclin decided to push a mine beneath the walls and under a strongly fortified church, which constituted an important part of the defences.

The mine was conducted with much secrecy, and was only discovered after it had passed beneath the walls. Sir Hugh Calverly at once began a countermine, which met the mining party of the French. Du Guesclin, entering the mine with one hundred of his men-at-arms, attacked and killed the countermining party of the garrison, and, entering the church with his war-cry of "*Notre Dame! Gues-*

clin!" compelled a speedy surrender of the garrison. Sir Hugh Calverly and the English leaders were spared, but the Norman and Navarrese leaders were executed in the market-place.

Du Guesclin immediately made preparations to besiege Saint Sauveur le Vicomte; but, before his preparations were completed, he received communications from Charles de Blois to come, with all his force, to aid him in raising the siege of Auray in Brittany. Charles V. at the same time sent letters to him directing him to go to the aid of Charles de Blois, and sent the Maréchal de Boucicaut to assume the duty of guarding the Norman frontier.*

These orders from Charles V. were gladly received by Du Guesclin, who had ever looked upon Charles de Blois as his natural sovereign; and his love for his native Brittany was an additional stimulus to his ardent nature to exert its energies for her deliverance.

As soon as John de Montfort learned of the preparations which Charles de Blois was making against him, he appealed to Sir John Chandos and other English knights of Aquitaine to come to his aid. The Black Prince made no objection to the appeal; and Sir John Chandos, taking two hundred lances and two hundred archers, joined the forces of De Montfort.

Charles de Blois issued orders for the assembly of his forces at Guingamp. Hardly had Du Guesclin commenced his march to the rendezvous, when he received tidings of the fatal illness of his father. Placing the Comte d'Auxerre in command of his

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., chap. clxxxi., p. 489.

forces, and accompanied by his brother Olivier, he repaired with all haste to the old Château of Motte-de-Broons.

The arrival of his son reanimated for the moment the rapidly failing powers of the dying man; and, as Bertrand entered the chamber of death, his father exclaimed, "My dear son, I have prayed for the consolation of seeing you once more before I pass away, and I thank God that he permits me to die in your arms; I thank him for the satisfaction of seeing you conquering and victorious; that which renders my happiness most complete is, that, since God has favoured you with his aid, and preserved you amid so many dangers, you have lived in his favour and love. I pray you with my whole heart to keep ever within his gracious favour, and by his grace that you remember that all honour and success in this world are transitory, but the glory which you may acquire by your virtues will be eternal."

These are solemn words; and Bertrand, overwhelmed with tears, could make no reply. The old man then charged him to be a father to his brothers and sisters, and directed them to look to and obey him as such, and with a benediction he passed away.

The sad duties of burial over, Du Guesclin returned to his command in the forces of Charles de Blois, and to join in raising the siege of Auray, which was surrounded by the troops of De Montfort.

Charles de Blois had marched from Guingamp to Castle Josselin, where he gathered his entire forces, which numbered four thousand men of all arms. Many distinguished chevaliers were present, among

whom were Du Guesclin, the Comte d'Auxerre (The Green Knight*), Olivier de Mauny, Eustace de la Houssoie, the Vicomte de Rohan, Lord de Beaumanoir, Guillaume de Launoy, Charles de Dinan, Eves de Mauny, and other distinguished chevaliers. Before Charles de Blois had left Castle Josselin, a herald from John de Montfort came to him, bearing a proposition to settle the dispute without resort to arms. The plan suggested was the equal division of the duchy between them, each to bear the title of "Duc"; and in case John de Montfort were to die without direct heirs, that the entire duchy should pass to the heirs of Charles de Blois. This proposition was rejected by the Comtesse de Blois on the ground that it would admit a doubt of her title. Du Guesclin was inclined to consider that the proposition came from fear as to the ultimate result of the contest; and he advised Charles de Blois to send back answer that John de Montfort should raise the siege within four days or be prepared for a battle.†

Charles de Blois marched his army from Castle Josselin to the abbey of Louvaux, and took a position in a park which was enclosed and separated from the town of Auray by a small stream only. The Comte de Montfort was anxious to attack him at once; but Lord de Clisson and Sir Robert Knolles advised against it, on the ground that the park was a strong position. Sir John Chandos also agreed with this opinion, and urged that De Montfort

* Sir Hugues d'Auxerre, so called on account of the colour of his armour.

† Cuvelhier, v. 5540.

should wait for Charles de Blois to open the battle.* The latter, confident in the strength of his forces, was anxious to do so; but, Du Guesclin urged him to hold the position which he occupied, since it gave him a great advantage over an attacking force.

On Sunday, the 24th of September, 1364, Charles de Blois, under directions from Du Guesclin, divided his army into three general divisions, with a rear-guard. The largest division was placed under command of Charles himself, with a number of the lords and barons; a second was commanded by Du Guesclin; while the third was placed under the joint command of the Comtes d'Auxerre and de Joigny. The rear-guard was commanded by Lord de Roye. The total force amounted to nearly four thousand fighting men.

The army of De Montfort was arranged in a similar order, by direction of Sir John Chandos. The forces of De Montfort numbered about three thousand. Of the first division, Sir Robert Knolles was given command; Lord Olivier de Clisson, of the second; and John de Montfort, with Sir John Chandos, commanded the third; while the rear-guard was placed under the leadership of Sir Hugh Calverly. To the latter command Sir Hugh Calverly objected, claiming his right to fight at the front; and an almost angry discussion followed between Sir John Chandos and Sir Hugh, until Chandos exclaimed, "Sir Hugh, it is either you or I who must take this duty: think whom it will best become." "Truly, sire," replied Calverly, confused by these words,

* Cuvelhier, vv. 5805–5821.

"I know well that you would demand nothing of me which would affect my honour. I will willingly do this, since so it is."* This arrangement was accordingly adopted.

Efforts to avert the battle by negotiations had failed. To a last effort by Lord de Beaumanoir, Sir John Chandos replied: "I advise you to come here no more, for my soldiers say that they will kill you if they can capture you. Say to my lord Charles de Blois, that, whatever may betide, my lord John de Montfort desires to do battle and to have no treaties of peace; and he further says that he will this day be Duc de Bretagne, or die upon the field."† Lord de Beaumanoir replied, "Chandos, Chandos! my lord has as great a wish to fight as my lord John de Montfort, and so have all his followers." Turning away, he returned to Charles de Blois to report the results of the interview.

Charles de Blois was impatient to commence the battle, and was unwilling to listen to the counsel of Du Guesclin, that he remain in the park, holding his troops in close order, and wait for an attack by De Montfort. He especially advised against crossing the little stream which ran between his position and Auray. The impatience of Charles de Blois, however, aided by the advice of some of his more impetuous leaders, decided him in favour of drawing out from his position, crossing the stream, and marching against his opponents, in close order of battle. The troops of De Montfort advanced in similar order. The division led by Du Guesclin

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 492.

† *Idem.*, p. 493.

was engaged with that commanded by Sir Thomas Knolles; Charles de Blois led his division against that commanded by the Comte de Montfort. A fierce struggle ensued. The division led by Charles de Blois successfully met that of De Montfort, and, gaining advantage in the struggle, De Montfort's forces were confused, and his banner struck down by The Green Knight. De Montfort, feeling that he was defeated, began to retire from the field, when Sir Hugh Calverly, commanding the rear-guard, which he had held in reserve, came to the aid of De Montfort, and stayed his retreat.

The division commanded by De Clisson had been attacked by that led by the Comte d'Auxerre. After a severe conflict, D'Auxerre was wounded in the left eye by the stroke of a battle-axe, and taken prisoner. By the assistance of Sir Hugh Calverly, De Clisson was enabled to compel the retreat of this division. At this time a strong body of troops, led by Sir John Chandos, attacked the division commanded by Du Guesclin. He fought "like an enraged lion," and, assailing the English with his battle-axe, "struck them down like dogs." He was attacked on every side, his ranks broken, and was finally beaten to the ground, but was hastily raised by The Green Knight, Charles de Dinan, and De la Houssoie. Continuing to fight until he was left with but a few of his followers around him, with no weapon remaining, he finally surrendered to one of the squires of Sir John Chandos. The division of Charles de Blois, now overwhelmed by numbers, suffered great slaughter. Rallying around the standard of their leader, they fought until he and most of

them had been slain. The slaughter continued in the pursuit, which was followed for a long distance. Of the killed were over nine hundred men-at-arms, among whom were the Lords de Rochefort, Avengour and Guergoulay; the Lords de Beaumanoir, de Rohan, Rais, and Reux, with Du Guesclin and the Comte d'Auxerre were taken prisoners.*

After the battle, the Comte de Montfort made public acknowledgment of his indebtedness to Sir John Chandos for the success of his conduct of the battle. At this point he was informed of the death of Charles de Blois, of which he had been ignorant. He was much overcome by this intelligence, and ordered that his body be conveyed with all honour to Guingamp, where it was interred.

The result of this battle, so disastrous to Charles de Blois, was, without doubt, due to his neglect of the advice of Du Guesclin. With a force superior in numbers to that of his adversary, and led by chevaliers of great skill and courage, and especially having the advantage of a position which could only be assailed at a great disadvantage by an attacking force, the fortune of the day should have been with him; but in leaving his position, contrary to the sage advice of Du Guesclin, he opened his line to an attack by the rear-guard of the forces of De Montfort, under Sir Hugh Calverly, which proved disastrous to him, at the moment when the victory was within his grasp.

The outcome of this battle decided the question of succession to the duchy of Brittany, and immediately afterward the Castle of Auray surrendered to

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 496.

the Comte de Montfort. He then proceeded to besiege Jugon and Dinan, which he captured after a most determined defence.

Charles V., anxious to quiet affairs in Brittany, sent commissioners to John de Montfort to arrange a treaty of peace between him and Jeanne la Boiteuse, the widow of Charles de Blois. De Montfort sought the advice of Edward III., who counselled him to make a generous provision for the Comtesse de Blois, but not to yield to any proposal for a division of the duchy. The negotiations were protracted and unsatisfactory, and it was not until the 13th of April, 1365, that a treaty was finally signed at Guérande. This provided that the Comte de Montfort should hold the title of "Duc de Bretagne" during his lifetime, and, in the event of his death without male issue, that the title to the duchy should revert to the oldest son of the Comtesse de Blois, and that she should hold the title of Duchesse de Bretagne during her life. She was to retain the county of Penthièvre and the vicounty of Limoges; her sons, John and Guy, were to be freed at the expense of De Montfort and she was to receive an annuity of ten thousand livres from the possessions of the Comte de Montfort.

The treaty of Guérande terminated the long and bitter strife which had, for more than twenty years, subjected Brittany to one of the saddest of wars.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAMPAIGN IN SPAIN—NAVARRETE.

1365–1368.

Treaty between Charles V. and Charles the Bad—Release of the Captal de Buch—Ransom of Du Guesclin—Charles V. and the Free Companies—Sir Hugh Calverly—Du Guesclin leads the Free Companies from France—Visits Urban V.—Affairs in Spain—Peter the Cruel and Henry of Trastamara—Du Guesclin crosses the Pyrenees—His continuous successes—The fall of Burgos—Henry crowned King of Castile—Du Guesclin made Count of Trastamara—Peter retreats into Gallicia—Expedition of the Black Prince—Du Guesclin visits France—His return—The battle of Navarrete—Defeat of Henry—Du Guesclin a prisoner—Henry visits France.

WHILE the treaty of Guérande ended the struggle for the succession of Brittany, it by no means settled all the questions which were agitating France. Charles the Bad had yet his peace to make with Charles V. It is true, that in the battle of Cocherel, Du Guesclin had nearly annihilated his army, had captured its commanding officer, the Captal de Buch, and had previously taken from him the greater part of his most important strongholds. This placed him in a condition,

where he was anxious to secure himself against further humiliation by Charles V.

Through the influence of his sister, Blanche de Navarre, widow of Philippe de Valois, and that of his aunt Jeanne, the widow of Charles the Fair, Charles V. was induced to listen to the requests of the Captal de Buch and enter into negotiations for a peace.* These led to the release of the Captal de Buch without ransom, and Charles V. presented him with the Castle of Nemours, for which he acknowledged Charles V. as his sovereign. On his return to the Black Prince, however, he receded from his agreement, and withdrew his claim to the Castle of Nemours, and resumed his devotion to the cause of the English.

After the defeat at Auray, Du Guesclin and others were taken by Sir John Chandos to Niort in Poitou, at which place they were soon ransomed. That of Du Guesclin was fixed at the sum of one hundred thousand francs. This amount exceeded his means of payment, and shows how important he was considered by his captors. He was aided in securing this sum by Charles V. and Pope Urban V. and also by Henry of Trastamara, who was desirous of obtaining his aid in his struggle to dethrone Peter the Cruel of Spain.

The assistance given by Charles carried with it some hard conditions, one of which was that Du Guesclin should consent to lead the Free Companies out of France.

Since the commencement of his reign, Charles had waged an incessant warfare against these plun-

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 502.

derers and disturbers of the peace of his kingdom. It was now his purpose to remove them entirely from it by securing the aid of Du Guesclin for its accomplishment. Charles does not seem to have considered the welfare of his neighbours, in attempting to rid his own kingdom of this scourge by turning it loose upon others. To his proposition Du Guesclin assented, and undertook the task.* A council was held by Charles V. to consider methods of securing the withdrawal of the Free Companies from France, at which Du Guesclin was present, and stated that he had desired to join the King of Cyprus in his war against the infidels, and if he could obtain an interview with their leaders, he would induce the Free Companies to join in the effort of the King of Cyprus. The plan was favoured by Charles V. and his counsellors, and Du Guesclin immediately sent a herald to the Free Companies, requesting a council of their leaders, and a safe-conduct for himself to meet them. The leaders were gathered at Chalons, where the herald found them.

Among them were† Sir Hugh Calverly, The Green Knight, Nicholas Escamboune, Mathew de Gournay, Robert Scot, Walter Huet, the Bourg de Pierre, Sir John Devereux, and other prominent leaders of the lawless bands. Most prominent among them was Sir Hugh Calverly. Of the adventurers of the fourteenth century, he was one of the most striking figures and characters. He is described as being a giant in size and strength, with

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 504.

† Cuvelhier, v. 7175.

prominent cheek bones, a red face, and red hair; his teeth were long and projecting, and his general appearance was somewhat savage. He had a reputation for "eating as much as four men, and drinking as much as ten." In battle he was extremely cool, and yet bold in his movements. In spite of these characteristics, he was very precise in all outward observances of the practices of the Catholic Church.*

Such was the chief who met the herald from Du Guesclin, and who, to his inquiry and request for a meeting, replied:† "Upon my faith, gentle Herald, I certify to you that I will see Bertrand du Guesclin here, if the others are agreed, and, for my part, most willingly; and, as God blesses me, I will give him some good wine. I can do so, for it did not cost me half a denier."

Sir Walter Huet and The Green Knight each expressed his desire that he should come, and all the others joined in swearing to give him a safe-conduct with no treachery. Under this, Du Guesclin came, and was warmly greeted by Calverly, who called him "friend and companion;" to which Du Guesclin replied "that he was no companion unless he would go where he desired to have him." To this Calverly replied: "Bertrand, by the Creator of the world, the best companion I will make you in every way, and will go wherever you desire, to fight the world, on this or the other side of the sea, except the Prince of Wales; and I will never go against him, but will go with him, I have sworn to it."

* Luce, p. 347.

† Cuvelhier, v. 7201.

"Sire," replied Bertrand, "I very much wish it." Calverly then ordered the best of wine to be brought, and, after all had partaken, Du Guesclin laid his plan before them. He proposed that they should go with him out of France to aid the King of Cyprus against the infidels; that he would lead them through Spain, which was a rich country, affording abundance of everything and the best of wines; that if, on his way, he could punish Don Pedro for his cruelties to his wife, he would do so; he further stated that many well-known chevaliers, Sir Walter de Mauny, the Comte de la Marche, and others, had agreed to accompany him, and that the King of France would pay a sum of two hundred thousand florins toward their expenses, and that he would go by way of Avignon, and procure absolution for them and their followers from the Pope.

He closed by saying, "For God's sake, let us be advised! let us go against the infidels! I will make you all rich, if you will follow my advice; and we shall secure Paradise when we die." "Sire Bertrand," said Calverly, "Saint Simon aiding me, I will never fail you. We will call each other companions, and never leave each other, not if the King of France do no evil nor make war against the Prince of Wales; for I am his subject, whom the Gascons and the soldiers of Guienne now sustain."

The agreement between the leaders and Du Guesclin was concluded. The men of some of the Companies were reluctant to promise, but general consent was finally secured. Du Guesclin, after the signing of the articles of agreement, went to Paris to communicate the result to the King. Charles extended

an invitation to the leaders of the Free Companies to visit Paris under a safe-conduct, which had been promised by Du Guesclin.

They accepted the invitation, and were sumptuously entertained by him. During the visit of the leaders of the Free Companies, other chevaliers, who intended to join the expedition, came to Paris. The rendezvous of the army was appointed at Chalons, and there gathered a force, which Froissart states to have amounted to thirty thousand men.

Starting on their march, they directed their course toward Avignon. As they approached the city, Urban V., who was much frightened, sent one of his cardinals to threaten them with excommunication unless they turned aside. He was met by Du Guesclin and some of the leaders, who, after hearing his message, desired him to return to the Pope and state that they were on their way to join the King of Cyprus in a war against the infidels, but, learning of his death, they had decided to make war upon the evil King of Granada, and before going they desired full absolution and a donation of two hundred thousand francs toward the expenses of the expedition. The Cardinal promised to carry this message to the Pope. The Pope readily promised the absolution, but demurred against paying the money, and endeavoured to raise it by a levy upon the people of the town; but he was compelled by Du Guesclin to furnish the money out of his own treasury.* Having obtained what he had desired from Urban V., Du Guesclin marched with his forces to Toulouse, on his way to the Spanish frontier.

* Cuvelhier, vv. 7695 *et seq.*

To understand the events and incidents of Du Guesclin's campaign in Spain, a brief glance at its condition at this period is necessary. Its affairs were in a peculiar state during that part of the fourteenth century which this sketch covers. In 1324 Alfonso XI. had succeeded to the throne of Castile, which, with Navarre, Aragon, Granada, and Portugal, constituted five petty kingdoms, lying in proximity to each other, and occupying the territory of this portion of Southern Europe. He had succeeded during his reign of twenty-six years in quelling the disturbances arising from the jealousies of his own nobles, and in uniting them against the neighbouring kingdom of Granada, where he had gained signal victories over the Moors, which were terminated by his death from the plague in 1350.

He married Donna Maria of Portugal, by whom he had one son, Peter. He had another family, however, consisting of ten children, whose mother was Donna Leonora de Gutzman. Twin sons of this second family, Henry and Fadrique, were his special favourites. Their mother, Leonora, exercised a controlling influence over him; so much so, that the Queen, Donna Maria, and Peter, her son, were absolutely neglected by him. Upon Henry he conferred the title of Count of Trastamara; and his brother Fadrique, when only ten years old, had been made Grand Master of St. Iago, one of the highest military orders.

These occurrences, and the studied injustice of his father toward him and his mother, developed in Peter to their fullest extent the traits of cruelty and hatred which were deeply implanted in his nature.

At the death of Alfonso XI., Peter succeeded him, being fifteen years of age, and with little previous training for the duties and responsibilities of the throne. He thus from inclination and necessity left the conduct of affairs to those who had been his father's trusted counsellors. Under the direction of these nobles, Leonora was successively imprisoned in several places, until she was finally put to death, by order of Maria, in the Castle of Tolavera.

The Grand Chancellor and Treasurer, Alburquerque, aspired to control the government, and for a time was enabled to conduct affairs in accordance with his own desires, and, in order to turn Peter's attention as far as possible from the management of the government, interested him in his ward, Maria de Padilla, who was of noble descent. At the same time his mother and others were endeavouring to persuade him to marry Blanche de Bourbon, niece of John of France, to whom he was formally affianced.

The efforts of Alburquerque to induce him to hasten the marriage succeeded, and the ceremony was performed June 3, 1353. Two days after the marriage he left his wife Blanche, and met Maria de Padilla at Montlavan. From this time the influence of Alburquerque waned, and he soon went into retirement. Peter undertook the conduct of his affairs, but was soon confronted with a formidable conspiracy, in which his mother, his bastard brothers Henry and Fadrique, with others, were the leaders. He was compelled to submit to this formidable organisation, and was imprisoned in the palace of the Bishop of Zamora, from which he succeeded in effecting his escape. The government, which was

badly conducted by the conspirators, quickly led the people to seek a change; and soon after his escape from the castle, he was enabled to rally to his support a force sufficient to insure his reinstatement at the head of affairs.

After regaining power, his first thought was to revenge himself upon those who had caused his reverses. The execution of such of the nobles as fell within his power was immediate. His bastard brothers, Henry and Fadrique, endeavoured to maintain themselves against him, but were unable to do so. Henry escaped; but Fadrique was taken prisoner, and after two years of confinement was put to death by Peter's orders.

The years which followed are but a black record of crime. Every person who stood in the way of the achievement of any plan or desire was put to death. The unhappy Blanche, his wife, after eight years of confinement in various prisons, was poisoned in the Castle of Jerez in 1361.

Henry of Trastamara, after his escape from Peter, was occupied for a period of several years in the warlike movements of France, especially with the Free Companies, and elsewhere. Early in 1362 he had instituted an effort to depose Peter and to succeed to the throne of Castile. He had gathered to his support a large number of knights and other followers, and was on the eve of active movements when the efforts of Charles V. to lead the Free Companies out of Spain culminated. It was a time favourable for his attempt. The unfortunate Queen Blanche had been removed by the crime of Peter; and this, with his career of cruelty, had alienated from him

the affection of his subjects, and engendered a bitter hatred on the part of many of his nobles. Any change promising improvement in these respects found ready listeners and equally ready supporters.

Peter recognised the dangers which beset him on every side, and viewed with special uneasiness the preparations which Henry was making against his throne.

While at Toulouse Du Guesclin received an addition to his forces, and then continued his march toward the Pyrenees. His ostensible object was to join in the war against the infidels; but his primary intention undoubtedly was to lead the Free Companies out of France, and to take part in the movements led by Henry of Trastamara to depose Peter the Cruel from the throne of Castile, and to punish him for his atrocities. What his full motives for this move might have been, cannot be stated; but we may be assured that leading the Free Companies out of France into the rich provinces of Spain was one of the strongest. In addition to this, some weight must be given to the desire of the Duc d'Anjou to secure the summary punishment of Peter for his cruel treatment of Blanche de Bourbon, his cousin; and to the appeal for assistance in deposing Peter, which Henry had made.

Crossing the Pyrenees with his army, he pushed into the kingdom of Aragon, where he openly declared his purpose of espousing the cause of Henry.

To the King of Aragon his coming was welcome, for it relieved him from the hostile operations which Peter the Cruel was pressing against him. To Peter himself his arrival was most depressing, since he felt,

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that with little support assured from his nobles, and with no affection from his people, his only reliance for maintaining himself must be a policy of force and cruelty, upon which he had always depended. In the presence of a large and well-disciplined army, led by so able a soldier as Du Guesclin, he felt that his powers of resistance were indeed feeble. Du Guesclin had evaded all temptations to declare the main purpose of his expedition, until he had fully passed the frontiers of France, and had led the Free Companies out of that country. His policy in this respect is easily understood. The Free Companies contained a large proportion of English soldiers, who had been connected with the cause of Edward III., and had served under the Black Prince. A treaty between Edward III. and Peter the Cruel still remained in force; and had Du Guesclin, while still in France, openly avowed his purpose of moving against Peter the Cruel, he would have incurred the opposition of the Black Prince, who undoubtedly would have dissuaded many of the most influential leaders of the Free Companies from joining him, on account of their alliance with the English cause.

The King of Aragon was profuse in his readiness to furnish supplies of men and money to Du Guesclin in the furtherance of his expedition. Seeking an early interview with Henry, Du Guesclin assured him that the objects of his expedition were to aid him in securing the throne of Castile, and to punish Peter for his cruelty to, and for the death of, the Queen, and to drive him from his kingdom. These assurances were most gladly received by Henry.

On hearing of the arrival of Du Guesclin and his

intention of aiding Henry, Peter gave way to his fears, and shut himself up in the town of Burgos, a strongly fortified place. This he strengthened by additional defences. These events occupied the latter part of the year 1365. Du Guesclin, in the meantime, was making preparations in Aragon, in conjunction with Henry, to move against Peter. This he began to do early in 1366, and laid siege to Magalon, in which Peter had left a strong garrison. This town was taken after a stout resistance. Borja was next besieged and captured. After this event Du Guesclin was made Count of Borja, and received the city as a gift from the King of Aragon.* Pushing on with his army, he crossed the borders of Aragon, and advanced into Castile. He immediately attacked and carried by assault the town of Calaharra. At this point he was disposed to declare Henry king of Castile. To this Henry objected, though the leading knights of the army of Aragon joined with those of Du Guesclin's forces in urging him to consent; he was, however, proclaimed king by the army.

Anxious to attack Peter, Du Guesclin continued his march toward Burgos. The strongly fortified town of Briviesca lay upon the route, and was besieged by Henry's forces. Refusing to acknowledge him as king, or to yield to his demands of surrender, the place was attacked by a simultaneous assault upon all sides. So fiercely was the attack made and maintained, that the governor was compelled to surrender.

* Cuvelhier, *Vie de Du Guesclin*, v. 7980 *et seq.* Cuvelhier here mentions the forces of Du Guesclin as the *White Company* ("la blanche compagnie"), on account of the white cross which was worn by his followers.

The loss of Briviesca was a great surprise and disappointment to Peter. From fugitives he learned of the impetuous valour of Du Guesclin and his forces, and was greatly terrified by them. His superstitious nature led him to ascribe something of the supernatural to him. The eagle, which Du Guesclin bore as a device upon his shield, recalled the prophecy of disaster to his throne "by an eagle crossing the Pyrenees from the north of France." He immediately prepared to flee from Burgos, in spite of the entreaties of the citizens that he should remain and sustain its defence. He hastily departed into Seville on the 28th of March, 1366.

Learning of the King's flight, Du Guesclin immediately moved with all his forces to invest Burgos. On receiving information of his approach, the citizens decided to surrender the city without resistance, and to acknowledge Henry as king, upon the condition that their ancient franchises should be preserved. This was granted, and on the day following the negotiations Henry entered the city. Great preparations for his reception had been made by the burgesses; and Henry and Du Guesclin were met at a distance from the city and escorted to it by a long procession of the clergy, the burghers, and the ladies of Burgos. The Countess of Trastamara, his wife, on summons previously sent by Henry, had arrived, and was escorted into the city by Du Guesclin, the Maréchal d'Audrehem, Sir Hugh Calverly, and others. Before the assembled people both Henry and the Countess acknowledged their obligation to Du Guesclin. On the following Sunday, Easter Sunday,* Henry was crowned king in the Monas-

* Cuvelhier, v. 8905 *et seq.*

tery of Las Huelgas. During the festivities which followed, he displayed his gratitude to Du Guesclin by creating him Count of Trastamara, giving him the county, and conferring upon him the additional title of Duke of Molina. Sir Hugh Calverly was made Count of Carrion, and liberal gifts were conferred upon the other prominent leaders. Henry, not yet feeling secure in his kingdom, urged Du Guesclin and the leaders of the army to extend their conquests in his dominions, and insure them against danger from Peter, which, in the event of their withdrawal, he felt certain would be imminent. This they consented to do.*

Moving on towards Toledo, Henry entered the city without opposition. On his route thither, and after his entry, he received from many towns a formal submission to his authority. After a brief stay in Toledo, he crossed into Andalusia in pursuit of Peter. Learning of his approach, Peter hastily embarked his treasures on an armed galley, with directions that they be taken to Tavisa in Portugal to await his own arrival. Sending his daughter, Donna Beatrice, to the King of Portugal, to whose son, Don Ferdinand, she had been affianced, he was greatly depressed by the refusal of the King to receive her, and by his declining to consent to the contract of marriage. These increasing disasters led him to seek safety in Galicia, to reach which he was dependent upon the King of Portugal for a safe-conduct through his kingdom. When but part way, he was abandoned by his escort, and was compelled to pursue his course alone, which he succeeded in doing.

* Cuvelhier, vv. 8985–9012 *et seq.*

On reaching his dominions, a review of his forces and resources led him to conclude that he was unable to cope with the forces of Henry. He accordingly abandoned Galicia, and sailed from Corunna with his daughters and treasure. Henry, in the meantime, had set out into Andalusia. His progress was without hostile opposition. On the contrary, he was most cordially received, and was accorded an enthusiastic welcome by the important towns of Cordova and Seville. By advice of Du Guesclin, he sent an envoy to the King of Portugal, in order to ascertain his feeling in regard to his struggle with Peter.* Sir Mathew Gournay, an English knight, was chosen for the mission. Reaching the Court of Portugal, he soon learned that the King was determined not to embroil himself in the quarrel, but to remain neutral. Sir Mathew returned to Henry with this information, and also that Peter had already passed through Portugal into his province of Galicia, and had sought the aid of the Black Prince.

There being no longer a need for the maintenance of so large an army, Henry, desiring to relieve Spain from the presence of the Free Companies, made them liberal payments for their services, and dismissed them. He, however, retained Du Guesclin and Sir Hugh Calverly, with their Breton and English followers. He was anxious to relieve himself of the expense of maintenance of so large an army, and was especially desirous of getting rid of the Free Companies, whose expeditions for plunder and lawless conduct led them to be feared and dreaded by

* Cuvelhier, vv. 9916 *et seq.*

the people of the country. It was a dangerous element, ever alert for any expedition promising excitement or booty, and ready to serve under any one who would insure them liberty to plunder. The rich country of Spain proved a most tempting field for these soldiers of fortune.

With the forces at his command, Henry considered himself able to place the province of Galicia under subjection to himself. He laid siege to the fortified town of Lugo, into which De Castro, the commander of the forces of Peter, had withdrawn with his troops, and which he had considerably strengthened. He pushed the siege unsuccessfully for a period of two months, and then withdrew to Castile. This move was hastened by the necessity for preparation to meet the invasion then rendered probable by the inclination of the Black Prince to yield to the urgent entreaties of Peter for aid to recover his kingdom. Peter, impatient for a decision in his favour, sailed to Bayonne to seek a personal interview with the Black Prince, who met him soon after his arrival.

Much question has been raised as to the reasons which influenced a prince of such high character as Edward to espouse the cause of a ruler of such infamous reputation as Peter, and one who was universally detested by his people. Many have been disposed to attribute it entirely to a chivalric impulse to aid a fallen prince, but there are those who incline to the belief that envy of the rising fame and brilliant career of Du Guesclin was the strongest motive.* That both these were potent influences, there is little doubt.

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 514.

On consultation with his most trusted counsellors, and with the approbation of Edward III. of England, his father, the Black Prince committed himself to the enterprise, and promised Peter aid, not only by military force, but also by the loan of money.

He at once began to assemble a well-equipped army, and gathered from among the Free Companies a large force of skilled men-at-arms, a large proportion of whom were English and Gascon knights with their followers. As they were virtually his subjects, he was enabled to call them to his service from the employ and pay of Henry. His forces were further increased by accessions sent later by Edward III. from England.

Negotiations were entered into by the Black Prince with the King of Navarre to permit the passage of his troops through his possessions into Castile. This could only be accomplished through the pass of Roncesvalles.

Charles of Navarre had already signed a treaty with Henry to hold this pass closed against the Black Prince, and also to aid Henry with troops against Peter. With his characteristic perfidy, he broke his treaty with Henry, and for a consideration agreed to leave the pass open for the forces of the Black Prince.

While these preparations against him were in progress, Henry was by no means idle. In accordance with the suggestions of Du Guesclin, he prepared to guard the entrances of his kingdom, and consented that Du Guesclin should go to France in order to procure aid from that country. He accordingly crossed the Pyrenees, visited the Duc d'Anjou, and

went thence directly to Paris to consult with Charles of France as to further procedure. He was most cordially received.

Meanwhile the preparations of the Black Prince were completed, and his troops were restless for activity. Christmas having passed, he began his march across the Pyrenees, having been joined by the forces sent from England by Edward III., under command of the Duke of Lancaster. His possessions in Aquitaine were left under the supervision and care of the Comte de Foix, an able guardian, well known for his business sagacity and military skill.

With an army of nearly ninety thousand men of all arms, he began his march over the Pyrenees in February, 1367. Crossing the pass of Roncesvalles, he reached the opposite side, and halted briefly at Pampeluna. Henry had employed the time occupied by these movements of the Black Prince and Peter in the collection of a well-appointed army.

After the Black Prince had crossed the Pyrenees, Henry moved his force across the river Ebro, and awaited the coming of Du Guesclin with reënforcements. These soon arrived, and consisted of nearly three thousand French troops, to which a number from Aragon had been added. With the French soldiers were the Maréchal d'Audrehem, the Begue de Villaines,* and other skilful leaders.

Henry was anxious to assume the offensive and risk a general battle. Against this Du Guesclin,

* He was a poor gentleman of Beauce. He was a thorough soldier, and by his merit obtained the position of commandant. He died after 1394.

D'Audrehem, and others of the French commanders, urged, stating that it was better to take a position, and await an attack by the forces of the Black Prince and Peter. With this opinion the leaders of his forces did not agree. They urged, that, if he did not take the initiative, his enemies would say that it was from fear, and he would thus lose the support of a number of his followers. This was probably suggested by the feeling existing against Peter on account of his cowardly acts, as he had been driven from his kingdom by want of courage to unite his people in his support and defend it.

While Henry had decided to risk a general battle at the outset, he listened to the advice of Du Guesclin as to the disposition of his forces. He accordingly moved to a position upon an elevation near the Castle of Zaldiaran, where, if attacked, it must be at a great disadvantage to the attacking party.

After the Black Prince had crossed the borders of Navarre, he took up a position near Burgos, and remained for a time, hoping that Henry would attack him. While he was thus located, Henry sent out detachments of troops to harass and capture his foraging parties, and to cut off his supplies. Provisions became scarce in the camp of the Black Prince. In the encounters between the detached parties of the forces of Henry and Edward, a number of victories for those of Henry resulted. A force under his brother, Don Tello, attacked and routed a detachment of English under Sir Hugh Calverly, and forced him to flee for safety into the English camp, and then attacked the camp of the Duke of Lancaster, which they threw into disorder and withdrew.

Immediately following this, they encountered a reconnoitring party of over two hundred English men-at-arms under Sir Thomas Felton. This they attacked; and the entire force was either slain or captured, Sir William Felton being among the killed.

These encounters encouraged Henry still further in his decision to risk a general battle, and he expressed his intention of doing so. Again the Maréchal d'Audrehem remonstrated with him, saying, "Sire! sire, I do not desire to dispute your words, but I wish to amend them slightly; and I say to you that when you meet the Prince in battle, you will find with him men-at-arms who are the flower of the chivalry of the whole world; and you will find them hardy, wise, and brave combatants, who would die where they stand rather than fly the field. But, if you will believe me, you can defeat them without striking a blow; for, if you guard the roads and passes closely whereby they obtain their supplies, you can starve and defeat them. They will be compelled to retreat into their own country in disorder, and you will have them at your mercy."

To this Henry replied, "Maréchal, by the soul of my father! I desire to see this Prince and prove my power against his. We cannot part without a battle, and God grant that I may have the right of it!" *

The scarcity of food, together with the fact that Henry remained in his strong position, led the Black Prince, with the concurrence of his leaders, to attempt to find some more favourable point from which to invade Castile. Withdrawing his army

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., pp. 529–531.

into Navarre, he marched his forces onward until he was able to again cross the Ebro upon a bridge near Logrono, and took up a position not far from the village of Navarrete.

Henry, aware of his movements, left his position, recrossed the Ebro, and camped his troops opposite the position of the Black Prince, upon the steep banks of a tributary of the Ebro.

He determined to cross the river and attack the forces of the Black Prince. Against this Du Guesclin urged, and advised the strengthening of his position by ditches and other defences. He stated that the scarcity of provisions in the camp of Edward was such that in three days he would be compelled to retreat, and they could then pursue him as they desired.

To this advice great opposition was made by the Spanish nobles, who urged that fear, or lack of interest in the welfare of the King, suggested such counsels. To this du Guesclin replied * :

" Upon my word, if we fight to-morrow, I tell you truly we shall be defeated, and either killed or made prisoners. By the Omnipotent God! great mischief will fall upon the King and his people. But, for all that you have said, and basely reproached me, by the faith which I have in God and the Holy Sacrament, on the morrow we will give them battle, and you shall see whether I am a traitor or a coward!"

On the following day, Saturday, April 3, 1367, drawing out from his position, Henry formed his lines in the open country near Navarrete, where he was confronted by the army of the Black Prince.

* Cuvelhier, vv. 11383–11412.

Edward's forces, amounting to about forty thousand, were under command of Sir John Chandos, the Duke of Lancaster, the Comte d'Armagnac, and the Captal de Buch, with Edward himself and Peter. Henry's army consisted of about eighty thousand men of all arms, more than half of whom were foot-soldiers.

Each army was divided into four divisions, and each division commanded by one of the most skilful of the leaders.

The movements began early in the day, the brunt of the battle soon being dependent upon the men-at-arms, who, dismounting, advanced in close order against each other. The division led by Du Guesclin, and that of the Duke of Lancaster, who was under the direction of Sir John Chandos, first met, each shouting its battle-cry, "*Castile! St. Iago!*" and "*Guienne! St. George!*" The conflict was hand-to-hand with sword and battle-axe. So fiercely did Du Guesclin lead the fray, that the division under Sir John Chandos was forced back, and Sir John was beaten to the ground, and narrowly escaped being killed. At this important moment the division on the left of Du Guesclin, commanded by Don Tello, gave way before the division led by the Comte d'Armagnac without making any resistance. This allowed the Comte d'Armagnac to strike Du Guesclin on his left flank and rear; while the Captal de Buch, finding but feeble opposition from the division confronting him, which supported Du Guesclin's right, pressed in upon him. He was thus attacked in front and on both flanks simultaneously. Henry used his utmost efforts to restore order with

the troops under his immediate command, and several times succeeded, but was forced to yield before the superior troops led by the Black Prince against him.

Du Guesclin continued his struggle, in spite of the summons to surrender by Sir John Chandos, until, finding himself fighting almost alone, with many of his bravest followers slain around him, he listened to a second summons from the Black Prince, and yielded himself a prisoner. Peter the Cruel, who was present, immediately asked that Du Guesclin and the Maréchal d'Audrehem should be delivered to him as his prisoners. This the Black Prince refused, knowing but too well the probable fate of two such brave warriors should they fall into such cruel and blood-thirsty hands. He placed Du Guesclin under the care of the Captal de Buch, who shared his apartment with him.*

The Maréchal d'Audrehem, when recognised by the Black Prince, was accused by him of having broken his parole and his promise, and was accordingly denounced by him as a traitor and a liar who deserved death. This the Maréchal denied with great dignity. The Black Prince explained that when the Maréchal had been made a prisoner at Poitiers, he had given his pledge and oath to pay the ransom fixed, and that until it was paid he would not take arms against the Black Prince or Edward III., unless he were with the King of France or some of his family. The old Maréchal then accepted the proposal of the Prince that the matter should be submitted to a jury of knights, and

* Cuvelhier, vv. 1208–1260.

twelve were chosen, four Gascons, four Bretons, and four English.

D'Audrehem then replied to the charge of the Prince. He admitted that the facts as stated regarding his ransom were true, but maintained, that, though he had not been able as yet to pay his ransom, he intended to do so; that he was not at this time in arms against the Black Prince, but against Peter, who was the head of the army; that the Prince was aiding Peter for pay; and that the whole expedition was against Peter, and not against the Black Prince. This statement the jury of knights sustained, and acquitted the Maréchal of any breach of honour or word, much to the satisfaction of all, and of the Black Prince also, who immediately exchanged him with the Begue de Villaines, and other French chevaliers, for Sir Thomas Felton and others, who had previously been captured by Henry's forces.

The victory of Navarrete was complete, and resulted in the destruction of Henry's army. This disaster was wholly due to his determined disregard of the advice of his most sagacious leaders by leaving a strong defensive position to risk a battle in the open field, where his opponent desired to draw him.

After retreating from the field, he attempted to reach the frontiers of Aragon, which he succeeded in doing, accompanied by a few of his followers. Crossing the kingdom of Aragon, he passed the Pyrenees, and sought the protection and assistance of the Comte de Foix.

After a brief stay, he visited the Duc d'Anjou, by whom he was kindly received at Villeneuve, near

Avignon. By the Duc d'Anjou his cause was presented to Charles of France, who listened to his requests for aid, and gave him the fortress of Pierre Pertuse, on the borders of Languedoc. Here he soon brought his family, and busied himself in collecting forces with which to reinstate himself firmly upon the throne of Castile.

CHAPTER X.

SUCCESSES IN SPAIN.

1368–1370.

The Black Prince and Peter disagree—The former leaves Spain—Henry raises a new army—Du Guesclin released—His enormous ransom—Raises an army for Spain—The Maréchal d'Audrehem joins him—Siege of Toledo—Du Guesclin besieges Peter in the Castle of Monteil—Death of Peter—His character—Failing health of the Black Prince—His difficulty with the Gascon Barons—Action of Charles V.—War with England—Death of Sir John Chandos—His character—Du Guesclin recalled from Spain—He is created Duke of Molina—His campaign with the Duc de Berri—Capture of Limoges—He is called to Paris—Is made Constable of France—His campaign in Normandy—Battle of Pontvalain—Its brilliant success.

IT is hardly possible that two characters so diverse in their traits as the Black Prince and Peter the Cruel could maintain a condition of mutual confidence and association. The one, possessing an open and manly disposition, generous and chivalric in his feelings toward others, was superior to any base or sordid impulse; the other, low, cunning, and vindictive, cruel, selfish, and tyrannical, and with no respect for the rights or life of others, was

controlled by a desire to conduct all his affairs by treachery or by force.

Immediately after the battle of Navarrete, these opposing traits of character opened a breach which time and events served only to widen.

The Black Prince had exacted a promise from Peter that no chevalier, squire, or person of quality, should be executed without a fair trial, such as the laws of chivalry demanded; and yet Peter, disregarding his word, wreaked his vengeance upon every subject upon whom he was able. One instance, which caused a most angry remonstrance from the Black Prince, will illustrate the utter disregard of every chivalric principle by this remarkable character.

On the day following the victory of Navarrete, a Spanish knight, Inigo Lopez, who had formerly been attached to Peter's cause, was the prisoner of a Gascon knight. Without a word of explanation, and allowing the knight no defence, he rode up to him and killed him, although, by all rules of chivalry, he was under the protection of the knight to whom he had surrendered.

Angered by the displeasure of the Black Prince, he requested that he yield to him all the knights and squires who had been taken prisoners in the engagement, offering to pay the ransoms demanded by their captors. This Edward refused to do, claiming that the lords, knights, and squires had fought bravely, and were entitled to all the privileges and courtesies due to brave chevaliers. Peter was incensed at this reply, and demanded that these chevaliers should be delivered to him, as they were

his enemies and the enemies of his kingdom, and should be put to death.

The Black Prince replied that he advised him to cultivate and acquire the good-will of his nobles and knights, and to govern his subjects by affection, and not by fear; that if he followed the course which he seemed to have adopted, he ran great danger of losing his kingdom and his life, and that he would alienate from himself all support of powerful allies, even himself.

Peter was only imbittered by this reproof, however, and brooded over his disappointed revenge.

From Navarrete the Black Prince and Peter went to Burgos, which opened its gates to them, and of which Peter at once took possession. His insensate and incontrollable spirit of cruelty and revenge soon led him to offend further the generous spirit of Edward. One of his first acts, on obtaining possession of Burgos, was the seizure, and imprisonment in a subterranean dungeon, of the Bishop of Braga, who was related to the Comte d'Armagnac, one of Edward's most devoted adherents.

The rapidly increasing dislike of Peter by the Black Prince, and the accomplishment of the purpose for which he had come to Spain, led him to prepare to return to his own possessions. He accordingly endeavoured to obtain from Peter the fulfillment of the promises which he had made of paying the expenses of his expedition, and certain sums in addition for his own services and those of his army. Peter evaded in every way the discharge of his obligations and the fulfillment of his promises. After four months of waiting with no

result, Edward turned his face homeward, broken in health and spirits, and depressed by the baseness and treachery of the man for whose interests he had sacrificed so much.

The return of the Black Prince to his own possessions, and the unpleasant relations existing between him and Peter the Cruel on account of the baseness and dishonesty of the latter, was a very encouraging condition of affairs for Henry. He augmented the activity of his efforts to secure adherents to his cause, and saw his available forces increasing with rapidity. Many of those who had left his service to join the standard of the Black Prince returned to him. The failure of Peter to keep his promises had excited the hostility of many others, who sought opportunity for revenge under the banner of Henry. The greater portion of the knights and squires who had been captured at Navarrete had been ransomed, and were anxious to serve again in his cause. From these various sources a strong and well-appointed army had been gathered, and was in readiness to enter the field, in his effort to regain the crown of Castile.

Preparing to return to Castile, he sought to secure the consent of the King of Aragon to the passage of his army through his dominions. This he was unable to gain. Accordingly he moved his troops through Aragon, having notified Pedro that if opposed he should resist with all his force. Pedro made a show only of resistance, and Henry traversed his kingdom unimpeded. Crossing the frontier of Aragon, he reached the Ebro and passed into Castile, and took up his residence in the town of Cala-

horra, where he rapidly gathered about him many knights of Brittany and Castile who had previously served under him.

Pushing his campaign with vigour, he soon appeared before Burgos. This city yielded to him on demand, and he was soon in possession also of Leon, Madrid, and other strongly fortified and important cities. Continuing the activity of his expedition, he next besieged the city of Toledo, having made himself master of nearly all of the northern half of Castile.

Since the battle of Navarrete, which was fought on the 3d of April, 1367, Du Guesclin had been held captive by the Black Prince. All the knights captured at the same time had been ransomed and released, and he was impatient to be freed. The Black Prince had declined all proposals for effecting his freedom. During this period of eight months his active spirit had made his captivity most irksome.

The unwillingness of the Black Prince to allow him to pay a ransom, at length led Sir John Chandos, Sir Hugh Calverly, and others of his ablest advisers and leaders, to urge him to consent to his ransom and release.

Du Guesclin was accordingly summoned before him. In reply to the inquiries of the Black Prince as to his welfare, he said: "Monseigneur, I am well enough, thank God! but might be better, and it is my right to be so, for I am the most honoured chevalier of the world, though I am held in your prison, and you know how and why. They say, throughout the realm of France and elsewhere, that

you dread me so much that you dare not release me from your prison." *

The Black Prince was greatly moved by this retort, and hastily replied: "How, Messire Bertrand, think you that for your chivalry we hold you prisoner? By St. George, no!"

The Black Prince was impressed by his frank and manly demeanour, and with admiration said that he might go free from ransom, if he would promise not to make war against himself or Edward III., or take up again the cause of Henry of Castile. He further stated that he would discharge the debts which he had incurred while a prisoner at Bordeaux, and in addition give him ten thousand livres with which to provide himself with a horse and arms. This Du Guesclin indignantly declined, saying that he had always been the loyal subject of the King of France, and should remain so; that he would die in prison before taking any oath to be untrue to his sovereign. He urged Edward to fix his ransom at a sum within his means, which had been greatly impaired by his expenses in this expedition. The Black Prince then generously said, "Fix your own ransom." Du Guesclin immediately placed it at the sum of one hundred thousand gold doubles.†

Astonished at the amount, Edward proposed that one half be the sum; but Du Guesclin insisted that he could secure the money by the aid of his friends, if given time; and, in the default of his friends, that "there was not a spinner in the kingdom of France who could twist a thread, but would work her fin-

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 545.

† The *double* was equal to 2 francs 95 centimes.

gers off to gain the means to secure his delivery from prison." *

Du Guesclin at once sent messages to his friends, who immediately responded, sending their squires with their seals to seal the bond in any amount which he might assign. Sir John Chandos immediately offered to lend him ten thousand doubles, which Du Guesclin declined with thanks.

Sir Hugh Calverly, who had come with him to Spain, but had been called from the cause of Henry of Castile to serve the Prince of Wales, his sovereign, came forward and said: "Bertrand, we have been companions. How much I owe you I cannot tell, but I here offer you thirty thousand doubles of gold." Du Guesclin thanked him warmly, and said, "Should I need it, I will ask you for it"; then, embracing each other, they separated.†

The Princess of Wales, hearing of the event, came to Bordeaux to see the man who had fixed so surprising a sum for his ransom. She was a great admirer of bravery and of noble deeds, and invited him to dine. After dinner she addressed him on the subject of his ransom and its high figure, and claimed the privilege of paying ten thousand doubles of the amount.

Du Guesclin was now set at liberty, and busied himself in securing the full amount of his ransom. The Duc d'Anjou advanced him thirty thousand

* "N'a filaresse en France qui sache fil filer,
Qui ne gaignast ainçois ma finance à filer
Qu'elles ne me voissent hors de vos las geter."
Cuvelhier, vv. 13645–13647.

† Menard, *Vie de Bert. du Guesclin*, chap. xxiv., p. 306.

francs; the King of France,* thirty thousand "doubles of Spain"; and his friends in Brittany, among whom were the Lords de Laval and Beaumanoir, the Vicomte de Rohan, the Bishop of Rennes, and others, soon supplied the balance. He then went to Roche Derrien, where he spent a brief time in visiting Tiphaine and his family. On inquiring for the sum of one hundred thousand francs, which had been deposited for safe keeping in the fastness of Mont Saint Michel, he learned that Tiphaine had withdrawn it during his imprisonment, and had expended the entire sum in the ransoms of many of the chevaliers who had been captured with him at Navarrete. At this he was greatly pleased, as well as with other matters connected with her administration of his affairs during his prolonged absence.

He could not remain long at Roche Derrien, but felt compelled to return to Bordeaux, discharge his ransom, and hold himself in readiness for the duties which he saw before him. On his route an instance of his great unselfishness and generosity occurred.

A body of knights and squires who were returning to seek their ransoms as prisoners of the unfortunate field of Navarrete, had halted for refreshment at a little inn. They were without means, poorly mounted, some on foot, and all in a needy condition. When the host learned that they had served with Du Guesclin, everything was placed at their disposal.

While they were at their repast, Du Guesclin entered, and recognised them as his former followers and companions. Their condition touched him

* Cuvelhier, Part II., p. 402, note by Charrière.

deeply, and, learning from each one the amount of his ransom, he called upon Evan de Mauny, his treasurer, to pay to each the necessary sum, beside sufficient in addition to procure a good horse and arms. To the innkeeper he gave a thousand livres. All begged him to keep the money, as he needed it to pay his own enormous ransom, but he insisted that it should be as he had directed.

Arriving at Bordeaux, after discharging his obligation to the Black Prince, he went to Montpellier, where he arrived January 7, 1368. Here he was joined by his old friend the Maréchal d'Audrehem. During the following month they assembled a considerable force, in which were many of the leaders of the Free Companies, his former companions in the expedition to Spain, who were ready to join him in a further attempt to place Henry of Castile securely on the throne.

On February 26th, with a force of nearly two thousand men-at-arms, they set out upon the march. At Nimses they met the Duc d'Anjou, whom they joined in an expedition into Provençe. On the 4th of March they besieged Tarascon, which surrendered after a month of resistance. On the 11th of April they besieged Arles. During this siege Innocent VI. interposed in behalf of the Queen of Naples, the Comtesse de Provençe, and as a result of his negotiations with the Duc d'Anjou the siege was raised.

While Du Guesclin was occupied in the operations in Provençe with the Duc d'Anjou, Charles V. was busy in preparations looking to the strengthening of his alliances, and watching the movements of Ed-

ward III., which were menacing. He sent envoys to Henry of Castile, and on November 20, 1368, renewed the treaty of Aigues Mortes, and promised to send him five hundred lances, under command of Du Guesclin. Accordingly, in January, 1369, Bertrand crossed the Pyrenees, and in February joined Henry in his camp before Toledo, where he had for more than ten months unsuccessfully besieged this city.

Henry learned at this time of Peter's intention to collect an army to relieve the besieged city of Toledo, and attack his forces.

In the council of leaders which was convoked, Du Guesclin advised Henry not to await the arrival of Peter, but to march against, surprise, and attack him; that a sufficient army should be left to maintain the investment of Toledo; and that he should move quickly against Peter with his remaining forces. This advice was adopted. With the troops under his own command, and those of Du Guesclin, Henry's army amounted to about three thousand knights, with other soldiers.

Moving rapidly forward, he learned that Peter had gathered his forces near the Castle of Monteil. Peter had no knowledge of the movements of Henry, and was unprepared for an attack, as Du Guesclin had surmised.

His troops accordingly were not concentrated, but were scattered in the vicinity of Monteil. Early in the morning Henry appeared before Monteil, and, advancing immediately, engaged the forces of Peter. So sudden and unexpected was the attack, that the army of Peter gave way, and fled before the division

led by Du Guesclin came up. The pursuit was followed by both divisions of Henry's army, and resulted in severe loss and slaughter to Peter's forces. He hurriedly shut himself up in the Castle of Monteil, which was at once closely besieged by Henry. Unprepared to sustain a siege at this point, Peter sought means to escape from the castle; but every outlet was so carefully watched, that flight was impossible. He then sought to escape by other means, and endeavoured to negotiate for his release. Some authorities state that through one of his followers he sought to bribe Du Guesclin to permit him to escape.* Others † claim that Peter, taking advantage of a dark night, attempted to leave the castle with five of his knights. The Begue de Villaines upon that night had charge of the guard, and, learning that an effort was being made by some of the inmates of the castle to leave it, arrested Peter and his companions. On finding himself a prisoner, he offered every inducement to the Begue de Villaines to grant him his freedom. Turning a deaf ear to all entreaties, he led him to the tent of Sir Alain de Houssoie.

Henry, on being informed of his capture, came in full armour to the tent. Demanding of the Begue de Villaines that the prisoner be delivered to him, he immediately addressed Peter, calling him "false traitor," and threatened him. Peter, replying "Thou art a lying bastard!" threw himself upon Henry, and bore him to the ground. Drawing a

* Ayala, *Chronica del Rey Don Pedro*, pp. 548, 549.

† Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 551; Cuvelhier, Part II., v. 1657 *et seq.*

dagger, he endeavoured to kill him; but one of the knights present, seizing Peter by the feet, turned him over upon his face. This gave Henry an opportunity to use his dagger, which he repeatedly struck into his brother's body, killing him, and ending the career of one who by his crimes had gained the title of "the Cruel."

Of fine physique, Peter possessed the qualities of endurance and vigour. His habits, for one of such propensities, were free from extreme dissipation. He was especially fond of the chase. In nature he was selfish, avaricious, and enjoyed amassing money and treasures. His habits in other respects were in harmony with his mental traits,—dissolute in every way. His crafty and base impulses inspired no respect or affection in anyone with whom he came in contact. He was as much dreaded by his friends as by his foes.

The death of Peter occurred March 23, 1369, and left Henry in possession of the throne of Castile. To the aid and counsel of Du Guesclin, Henry was greatly indebted for this result.

The successful termination of the expedition of Du Guesclin into Spain was an important factor in deciding the course of subsequent events in France. Charles V. had for some time been seeking means to attain the great desire of his life, which was the expulsion of the English from France. Watching closely all events and conditions bearing upon the welfare of his realm, he was ever ready to avail himself of any favourable circumstances. At this time the declining health of the Black Prince, and his failure to prevent Henry from securing the throne of Castile, as well as the growing reputation of Du

Guesclin as a military leader of great skill, presented the opportunity which he desired for an open rupture with Edward of England. This pretence was readily found in complaints against the acts of the Free Companies, which, having returned from the expedition into Spain, were committing excesses in many parts of France.

The great majority of the leaders and men-at-arms of the Free Companies had been enrolled among the forces of the Black Prince, and had returned from Spain into France, with him, and failing to obtain the pay promised to them by him, had abandoned his province of Aquitaine, and maintained themselves by pillaging the adjoining sections of France. This was in contravention of the ordinance issued by Edward of England after the peace of Brétigny, commanding them to abstain from all acts of hostility to France. The Black Prince, having failed to prevent this, and having denied them the privileges of his own province, was held responsible for his hostile acts.

A further opportunity came to Charles in the fact that the Black Prince had become heavily involved in debt by the expenses of the expedition into Spain, through Peter's failure to keep his promises of payment, and through the extravagance of his own affairs. These conditions compelled him to seek means to increase his revenues. This he attempted to do, according to the customs of the time, by added imposts upon his subjects. By the advice of his counsellors, he levied *fouage* * in the province of Aquitaine.

* A tax upon each fire, and a means resorted to by rulers of that time to obtain needed revenue.

On the assembly of a council of the authorities of the great cities, at Niort, some of the leading barons consented to the impost; but the knights of Gascony, and the deputies from their cities refused to submit to a *fouage* tax, which had never before been imposed upon them. Asking for time for consideration, they withdrew from the conference, and, after reaching their own domains, declared that they would not attend a future conference on the subject, nor pay the tax proposed, and that they would resist its collection by force if necessary. They maintained that they had never been subjected to any tax, and that they had always been free, and had remained in this condition when subject to the Kings of France. They further declared that such a tax was at variance with the feudal system, and consequently that they could consider it only a measure of oppression; that while, as his subjects, they owed him military service, this was confined to the maintenance of his own possessions, and not to foreign conquests or to aid foreign princes.

Charles was only too ready to listen to their complaints, and immediately entered into a secret alliance with some of their most powerful and influential members, and later, on December 28, 1368, had made a public treaty with the Gascon lords, in which he not only promised to maintain all their ancient rights and privileges, but to sustain a defensive and offensive alliance with them against either the Black Prince or Edward of England.

The Black Prince was unwilling to yield to the advice of some of his most trusted counsellors to withdraw from his proposal to levy this tax, and determined to collect it.

Meanwhile, Charles, under pretence of examining into the matters of complaint by the Gascon lords, was busy in secretly securing the adherence and friendship of the leaders of those sections of France which were most hostile to and restless under English rule. Later, he sent envoys summoning the Black Prince to Paris to answer the complaints made against him by the Gascon nobles. He was led to this resort by the urgent appeals of the Gascon barons for his aid in resisting the demands of the Black Prince. Wearying of English domination, they had decided to throw off their alliance with Edward, and come under the authority of the Crown of France; and Charles concluded, that, with the assurances of devotion and loyalty received from the provinces of the south of France as well as from those in the north, he could adopt the advice of his council, and accordingly issued the summons referred to.

The surprise of the Black Prince was great, and his anger correspondingly so. To the envoys of Charles he replied that he would obey the summons, but that when he came it would be at the head of an army of sixty thousand men. The envoys left Bordeaux, but, before they had proceeded far on their return, they were overtaken, and thrown into prison by order of the Black Prince.

The Gascon barons were incensed at this action, and took occasion to revenge it by attacks upon his followers, killing and capturing a number of them. At this juncture Edward of England sent to Charles V., requesting him to recall his approval of the action of the Gascon barons, and order them to return to their allegiance to the Black Prince.

In reply Charles recounted the ravages of the Free Companies, and the failure of Edward to prevent them, in accordance with the provisions of the treaty of Brétigny. Edward retorted that when Charles had done what was demanded of him, then he, Edward, would do what was asked by Charles.

Having brought matters to the point which he desired, Charles convoked an assembly on the 9th of May, 1369, at Paris, and laid the subject before it.

The discussion occupied but a brief period, and resulted in a decision favouring a declaration of war against England. This was the action which Charles desired, since, in anticipation of this event, he had been making active preparations in secret. He sent a message of defiance to Edward by a scullion, and, not awaiting the reply, commenced the campaign by operations in the county of Penthièvre, for which he had already made provision. The force operating here, under command of Sir Hugh de Chatillon and Count Guy de Saint Pol, captured the town of Abbeyville, and with little opposition drove the English entirely from this country.*

The policy pursued by Charles was most irritating to Edward of England, and he immediately commenced preparations to meet the forces of the French King.

In addition to a large naval expedition, he planned for active coöperation of his subjects in France against Charles.

He offered as an inducement, to any of the nobility and leaders who should espouse his cause, the privilege of holding as their own any castles or for-

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 566.

tresses which they might capture, as well as any towns or cities. In accordance with the recommendations of Parliament, he reassumed the title of King of France.

While Edward of England and the Black Prince were making these preparations, Charles was by no means idle. He was unremitting in his efforts to attach to his service the most experienced and powerful leaders of the Free Companies who had been in the service of the Black Prince and of England. By this policy he not only secured a large number of the most experienced soldiers of the time, but drew away correspondingly from the strength and prestige of the English King. At the same time, in the centre and south of France, the Ducs d'Anjou and de Berri gathered their forces in the provinces along the frontiers of Aquitaine, and pursued a system of hostile movements against the possessions and forces of the Black Prince.

Edward III. and the Black Prince were quite as active as Charles V. in their preparations. Sir Hugh Calverly was recalled from Spain, and a strong force was placed under his command. Sir John Chandos and the Captal de Buch were given a body of troops, with instructions to invade and lay waste the territory of the Gascon barons. From England the Earls of Cambridge and Pembroke, with a considerable force, invaded the county of Perigord, and a large naval expedition under command of the Duke of Lancaster set sail for the coast of France. The military operations which followed these extensive preparations were unimportant, judging from results. The campaign seems to have

been one of vindictive measures on both sides, rather than of strategic or critical military movements which should give positive results. The campaign of 1368 closed with little of encouragement or gain for the cause of Edward.

At the suspension of these active operations for a brief period, Edward met with an irreparable loss in the death of his greatest leader and most valued counsellor, Sir John Chandos. On December 31, 1369, as he was on his way to the city of Poitiers, with a force of about fifty lances and a few archers, he met a body of French and Breton knights and bowmen. An engagement between the two forces followed, in which those of Sir John Chandos were defeated, and he was mortally wounded by the thrust of a lance.*

Thus ended the life of one of the most conspicuous characters in the military history of the time. Imposing in person, he possessed every characteristic of the *beau ideal* of the chevalier. Generous and noble in nature, he won the respect and affection of his opponents as well as of his friends. His military genius was surpassed by but one man of that period, Du Guesclin. There are many points of similarity in their characters and talents. Sir John Chandos was ever loyal to his King and the interests of his country. Nothing could swerve his high sense of duty in this direction. To the fallen and defeated he was ever generous, and his courage and generosity led him to esteem and to recognise these traits in others. In respect to his military talents, he also resembled Du Guesclin in his ability

* Cuvelhier, Part II., v. 19312.

to manœuvre bodies of men and to execute strategic movements at a time when the idea of military art was based almost exclusively upon individual prowess and dexterity in the use of arms.

It is extremely difficult to decide how much of the credit which has been accorded to the Black Prince for the success of his military movements in France is due to Sir John Chandos. It must not be forgotten that at the battle of Crécy, Edward of England placed the Black Prince, then a boy of sixteen years, under the care and guidance of Sir John Chandos, who directed his every movement on that day. At Poitiers, ten years afterward, Sir John Chandos was certainly the source from which came the important orders of the day.* At the decisive battle of Navarrete, † where Henry of Castile, disregarding the counsel of Du Guesclin, forced the fight and was defeated, Sir John Chandos directed the movements of the English with the Duke of Lancaster, and bore the brunt of the fight. Among the representative characters of his time, he stands among the first in ability, sagacity, and integrity. Our estimate of him is not to be based upon the standards of to-day, but upon the best which appear in the century in which he lived.

Although much had occurred to encourage Charles V. in the failure of the English to secure any results of importance in their efforts of the year 1369, he realised the necessity for resort to every means of strengthening his position and augmenting his military resources. Calling a council of the Peers at Paris, he laid before them the necessity for exten-

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 346. † *Idem.*, p. 537.

sive and radical measures to terminate English supremacy in France. As a result of the deliberation of this conference, a decree was issued, on the 14th of May, 1370, which declared all the possessions of Edward III. and the Black Prince forfeited to the Crown of France. It was further decided to assemble a large additional army for active operations in the province of the Black Prince, and also to recall Du Guesclin from Spain.*

The summons to return to France found Du Guesclin occupied in aiding Henry of Castile in completing the settlement of the affairs of his domains. By his assistance Henry had been enabled to reduce to subjection those who resisted his authority, and to establish his government firmly. Before parting with him, Henry publicly acknowledged his obligations to him, and conferred the title of Duke of Molina upon him, granting him Soria and other important towns, in addition to which he paid him a large sum of money.†

Arranging his affairs in Spain as speedily as possible, in response to the urgent messages of Charles, he set out on his return to France. Crossing the Pyrenees, he visited the Comte de Foix, with whom he made an offensive and defensive alliance; after which he passed directly on to Toulouse, which city he reached in July, 1370. Here he met the Duc d'Anjou, who, having assembled a strong force consisting of about two thousand lances and some six thousand foot-soldiers, was awaiting his coming in order to commence his campaign.

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., chap. cccliii., p. 608.

† One hundred and twenty thousand Spanish doubles.

Being placed in command, he immediately set out from Toulouse, and pushed with his forces into Agenois, where he speedily took the towns of Agen, Moissac, Sainte Marie, and others of importance. The fortress of Aiguillon surrendered after a slight resistance. From this point he marched to and besieged the strong town of Linde, which was saved from surrender by the timely arrival of the Captal de Buch and Sir Thomas Felton. Withdrawing from Linde, he pressed on to the vicinity of Bordeaux.

This expedition had been eminently successful. In considerably less than two months, between forty and fifty towns, castles, and fortresses had been taken by him from the English.

In accordance with the advice of Du Guesclin, the Duc d'Anjou disbanded his army, and distributed the troops among the garrisons of the captured towns and fortresses; and Du Guesclin, leaving him, went to Limoges to join the Duc de Berri. On his way thither he was entertained at Perigneux in Périgord by the family of the Count. In mounting upon the tower of the castle, he recognised an English banner upon a neighbouring abbey, and, learning that it was held by a strong force of English, he called his troops together, and arranged for an immediate attack upon the place. Arriving before the walls, he demanded an unconditional surrender, which being refused, he ordered an assault, which he led in person. Although making a most stubborn resistance, the English garrison was unable to withstand the impetuous and well-planned attack of Du Guesclin's forces. The place was carried by

storm, and was restored to the monks, as Du Guesclin had asserted that he would do.*

After a brief stay at Perigneux, he pushed on to Limoges, and joined the Duc de Berri, who was holding the place in a state of siege. Du Guesclin succeeded in arranging terms of surrender, in a few days after his arrival, with the Bishop of Limoges, who was in command of the city. This was an important capture, and served to close the campaign of the Duc de Berri, as he followed the advice of Du Guesclin, and distributed his army among the garrisons of the fortresses and towns which he had captured.

While these events were occurring in the middle and south of France, Sir Robert Knolles was pursuing a campaign of plunder and destruction in the north. Leaving Calais, and avoiding the fortified and garrisoned places, he ravaged the country of Artois, Picardy, and Champagne, and came within a short distance of Paris. Charles made no effort to oppose him by sending forces against him. He held his troops as garrisons in his fortresses, until, fearing the nearer approach of Sir Robert Knolles, he sent for Du Guesclin to come to Paris, in order that he might place him at the head of his forces.

The fall of Limoges was a surprise and a source of great annoyance to the Black Prince, and he resolved to retake it immediately. Assembling a force of over five thousand troops, of whom twelve hundred were lances, and although feeble in body and suffering so severely from dropsy as to be unable to ride a horse, he was borne in a litter and

* Cuvelhier, vv. 17381–17502.

accompanied his troops to Limoges, which he closely invested. On account of the strength of the place, he decided to refrain from attempts to take it by assault, and to endeavour to effect its capture by mining.

After a month of work, he completed his mine, the besieged being unable to countermine successfully. A portion of the wall was thrown down, thereby affording his troops an easy entry into the town, which was taken after considerable resistance. By his orders the city was sacked and burned, and the inhabitants—men, women, and children—were massacred. Froissart * describes the scenes of merciless destruction of life and property which seem almost incredible. It is said that more than three thousand persons, of all ages and of both sexes, were butchered on this day. After the capture and sack of Limoges, the Black Prince returned to Cognac, terminating his operations for the season, and disbanding his army.

During the siege of Limoges, Du Guesclin, with a force of two hundred lances, undertook a campaign in behalf of Jeanne, widow of Charles de Blois. This was conducted with his usual energy. He rapidly covered the country of Limousin and Périgord, and captured a number of strong places. The siege of Limoges occupied the entire energies of the Black Prince, who made no effort to check him.

He besieged and carried by assault the fortress of St. Yrieux in Limousin, and soon after took the town of Brantôme in Périgord. Here he received a summons from Charles V. to come to Paris and

* Liv. I., Part II., pp. 619, 620.

arrange a campaign to check the ravages which were being perpetrated in the north.

Placing his forces under command of his brave cousin, Olivier de Mauny, he set out for Paris with but six of his followers. He was met by the officers of Charles V. immediately upon his arrival, and conducted to the King, by whom and the nobility he was most cordially received. The King informed him that he had been elected, by the Council of the Nobles of the realm, Constable of France. Du Guesclin at once begged to be excused from accepting so high an office, saying that he was but a poor chevalier compared with the great lords and valiant men of France. The King declared that it was the will and order of the Council of the Lords of France, and that he did not wish to go contrary to it. Du Guesclin replied *: "Dear Sire and noble King! I neither wish, nor dare, nor am able, to do contrary to your wishes, but it is true that I am poor and of lowly birth. The office of Constable is so grand and so noble, that he who holds it must lead and command the great even more than the humble. Here are my lords, your brothers, your nephews, and your cousins, who have command of men-at-arms in expeditions; how should I assume to command them? So I pray you to take this office from me, and confer it upon another who will accept it more willingly than I, and who knows better how to perform its duties."

The King replied: "Messire Bertrand! Messire Bertrand! do not excuse yourself in this way, for I have neither brother, cousin, nephew, count, nor

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 621.

baron in my realm who will not obey you; so accept the office, I beg of you!"

Du Guesclin, recognising the earnest wish and determination of the King and Council that he should accept the office, replied: "Sire! I will accept the office of Constable upon one condition, which I will state, and that is, that you promise to believe nothing said to my prejudice behind my back until it is repeated before you in my presence." * The King replied, "I promise it!"

Du Guesclin was then presented with the sword of office, and was accorded many honours by the King, nobles, and barons. He immediately commenced preparations for an active campaign against the English under Sir Thomas Knolles. Turning a deaf ear to the timid counsels of Charles V., and taking the fifteen hundred men-at-arms which Charles furnished, he went to Pontorson, where he formed an alliance with Sir Olivier de Clisson. This was during the latter part of October, 1370. The reluctance of Charles V. to furnish means for the maintenance of such a force as Du Guesclin considered indispensable, and for so active a campaign as he considered necessary, was no barrier to the prosecution of his plans. Drawing upon his private means, he established his headquarters at Caen, where he called for the assembly of all those who desired to enter the service. Within a short time a body of more than three thousand knights and squires had gathered under his banner.

Having thus exhausted the resources which he had already drawn, he summoned Tiphaine, his

* Cuvelhier, v. 17900 *et seq.*

wife, to come, bringing all his plate and her own jewels. She came quickly to Caen, and entered readily into his plans for a grand entertainment * of the leaders who had assembled. In his preparation for sumptuous hospitality, he was aided by his wife, and her presence added greatly to the success of the event. Among the lords and barons who graced this assembly with their presence were the Maréchal d'Audrehem, Sir Jean de Vienne, Sir Olivier de Clisson, Sir Alain, and Sir Jean de Beaumont, Olivier du Guesclin, the Comts de la Perche and Alençon, and Pierre de l'Estrée, with many others.†

No pains had been spared to insure the magnificence of this entertainment. The plate with which the tables glistened was rich and profuse, and excited the admiration of all present. It had been mainly acquired in his recent campaign in Spain. The dinner was upon a corresponding scale, and was a source of surprise to all present.

During the dinner, Lord de Clisson addressed the Constable, and said: "Sire Bertrand, there are more than three thousand soldiers here who have come to serve you against the English, while the King of the honoured land of France has given you pay for fifteen hundred only. If these are refused their offer of service I do not doubt but that they will return to service with the English, and form a strong company."

"Sire," replied Bertrand, "by the honoured Virgin! all will be retained in service, and will be

* Cuvelhier, v. 17974 *et seq.*

† Idem., v. 17995.

paid; and were they twice the number, I have sufficient gold and silver to pay them all. See you not the plate with which this hall is filled? By my faith! I have not pawned it; nor am I married to it; I can well dispose of it according to my wish. To the King I will lend it until the English shall repay it, which will be within a year." *

The dinner passed most successfully, and within the few succeeding days the Constable converted the plate into money, which was devoted to the equipment and pay of his troops and furnishing supplies. Preparations were made to move immediately against the English, to the great delight of the assembled forces. Before leaving Caen, Du Guesclin took leave of his wife, saying: "Dame, you can remain here if you desire, or you can return to Roche Derrien if you prefer it. Pray to God for me, that as he has led me here, so he will bring me back in safety. I will never return until I shall have met in battle the Constable of England or his lieutenant."

"Sire," replied the Dame, "I pray to the All-Wise to keep you from death and imprisonment, and I beg you to keep in mind the perilous days which are before you. Before Navarrete you failed to follow my advice; if you had believed me, the battle would not have been lost."

"Dame," replied Bertrand, "I know surely that he who does not heed his wife's counsel will repent it later." †

* Cuvelhier, v. 18019 *et seq.*

† "Qui sa fame ne croist, à la fois s'en repent."
Cuvelhier, Part II., v. 18109.

From Caen he marched to Vire. While here a herald arrived from Sir Thomas Granson, the English commander, bearing a challenge to meet his forces in battle in the field. Du Guesclin gave the herald a present of money and this message: "Tell your masters that they shall receive speedy news of me, for, if they desire to meet me on the field, I have a greater desire to find them."

The herald was given by the Constable's orders to the care of his own heralds, by whom he was so well entertained that he became hopelessly intoxicated and fell asleep. Du Guesclin ordered his forces to prepare to march immediately. This order caused some murmuring, for the night was cold, dark, and tempestuous, with heavy rain. The Constable was deaf to all entreaties for delay, and said: "At daylight must we be upon our enemies, for they will be surprised and quickly taken. To God I vow that I will never undress, nor eat bread or drink wine, nor dismount from my war-horse, of my own will, until I shall have found the English! Those who do not follow me shall be impeached for treason before our King of Saint Denis."

The Constable mounted his war-horse, followed by five hundred only at first, among whom were his brother Olivier, Alain de Beaumont, his brother Jean, and Olivier de Mauny.

The others followed as rapidly as they were able. But few could keep the pace set by their impetuous commander; but, in spite of fatigue and the failure of the horses of many of his followers, his only reply to remonstrance was, that at daylight they would surprise and fall upon the English, and would be

able to obtain horses and whatever they might desire.

At daylight the next morning he had reached Pontvalain after a forced march of sixty miles, and with barely two hundred of his cavaliers with him. He halted to give his soldiers time to readjust their armour and saddles, and to refresh themselves with a hasty repast. He then announced that he was about to attack the English with the forces present, and that they would be soon reënforced by Lords de Clisson and de Rohan, and others constantly arriving. Approaching the camp of the English silently, when close upon it, he ordered his men to dismount, and, forming them in line of battle, gave the order for the charge. This was promptly obeyed, and the French pressed rapidly forward, shouting their battle-cries of "*Montjoy! Notre Dame!*" "*The King of St. Denis!*" "*Du Guesclin the bravest!*" "*To death with the English!*" * The English were taken completely by surprise. The forces in the camp amounted to about seven hundred, while the remainder of the army of Sir Thomas Granson was scattered in the vicinity. Their commander was awaiting the return of his herald with an answer to his challenge, which he little expected would be so soon answered by Du Guesclin in person.

The Constable pressed on with his forces into the camp, which was soon thrown into great confusion. Sir Thomas Granson rallied his troops and bravely contested the ground; but the impetuous attack of the Constable was supported by the arrival of Lord

* Cuvelhier, vv. 18428–18484.

de Clisson with additional soldiers, and the English commander was compelled to surrender to Du Guesclin.

The defeat of the English was complete, and the pursuit of their routed forces was continued for a considerable distance with the slaughter which usually followed defeat in the battles of the time. A number of the retreating English soldiers took shelter in the neighbouring town of Vas, where they were immediately besieged by the Constable. To his summons to surrender, the Governor sent a refusal. The Constable replied: "By Notre Dame and the body of St. Benedict! I will sup in the chief donjon of the fortress this night!"

He immediately ordered an assault, which was made by the French with great fury. A Breton squire first gained the wall, and fought the English "like an angry lion." He was followed by another Breton squire and Jean de Beaumont, and the three maintained their struggle upon a small tower which they had gained. The French now mounted the walls on all sides. The Governor sought to escape by a small postern gate, but was captured and slain, as also those of his garrison who attempted to follow him.* The Constable thus fulfilled his threat, and supped with his leaders in the fortress that night.

Without delay he followed up his successes, and attacked and captured the towns of St. Maur, Rulli, and Neroux. Sir Robert Knolles, unwilling to risk a battle with Du Guesclin, disbanded his forces and scattered them, taking refuge himself in the fortress

* Cuvelhier, Part II., vv. 18520 *et seq.*

of Derval. Learning that a part of the army of Sir Robert Knolles was endeavouring to escape to England, under command of Sir Robert Neufville, the Constable despatched Lord de Clisson to attack them. He encountered them as they were about to embark. In a severe action the English were defeated, a large number slain, and the remainder, with their leader, were made prisoners. The tidings of this success reached the Constable December 1, 1370, at Caen, and was the closing act of a brilliant campaign, which was now terminated by the lateness of the season.

The Constable went to Paris soon afterward to hold a consultation with Charles V. and the lords of the realm as to future plans and operations. His continuous succession of victories and captures of important fortresses during the campaign just closed, together with the final defeat, dispersion, and capture of the English forces, served to stimulate the timid spirit of Charles V. His courage, which had been so crushed by the disasters of Crécy and Poitiers, revived under the assurance of future success given by the skill and prowess of the new Constable. He entered willingly into Du Guesclin's project of raising a larger army for the conduct of a most vigorous campaign.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONSTABLE LOWERS ENGLISH PRESTIGE.

1371–1372.

Campaign in Auvergne and Poitou—English movements, land and naval—Death of Tiphaine Raguenel—Her character—Evan of Wales—Operations near Rochelle—Capture of Moncontour : of St. Sevère—Surrender of Poitiers—Defeat and capture of the Captal de Buch—Surrender of Rochelle—Capture of Benon and Thouars—Edward III. fails to relieve Thouars—Du Guesclin returns to Poitou—Affair in Brittany—His successful campaign in Brittany.

IN January, 1371, the Constable began to collect forces for the operations soon to be undertaken. It was at this time that the Black Prince, failing in health, returned to England with his family, leaving the Duke of Lancaster, his brother, in charge of his possessions. With the Black Prince, the Duke of Cambridge and Earl of Pembroke also went to England.

Soon after the departure of the Black Prince, the Duke of Lancaster, while attending the funeral obsequies of his nephew Edward, the oldest son of the Black Prince, who had died at the age of six years, received tidings which called him imme-

diately into the field. Two hundred Breton lances of the garrison of Périgord, under the command of the chevaliers Guillaume de Longval, Alain de Houssoie, Louis de Mailly, and Lord d'Arcy, had appeared before the strong castle of Montpaon, and demanded its surrender. The Governor, who was more French than English in his inclinations, surrendered the fortress to them.*

The Duke of Lancaster and the Barons of Guienne assembled forces, amounting to seven hundred lances and five hundred archers, and immediately proceeded to besiege Montpaon. They employed a body of neighbouring peasants to cut trees and fill a portion of the ditch with them. By this means they were enabled to approach the walls, and to make several assaults, which proved unsuccessful.

Near the Castle of Montpaon was that of St. Macaire. This was held by two Breton squires, Jean de Malaestroit and Sylvestre Budes. Both desired to go to the aid of the garrison of Montpaon. But one, however, could go, and they accordingly drew lots to see which it should be. The lot fell upon Sylvestre Bude, who, with twelve men-at-arms, succeeded in obtaining entry to the fortress that night, and was welcomed by the garrison.

After a time the English prepared a shield, under the protecton of which their men could work upon the walls while their archers held the garrison in check. In this manner they were enabled to effect a breach in the wall. This compelled the captains

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 626.

of the garrison to treat for terms of surrender. The Duke of Lancaster at first refused to make terms, but later yielded to the counsels of the Captal de Buch and Lord de Angle, and accepted the surrender of the Breton knights as prisoners.*

Admitting his prisoners to ransom, the Duke of Lancaster returned to Bordeaux, and the Gascon lords to their own province.

The Constable had marched with his forces into Auvergne early in February, 1371, and, though aware of the siege of Montpaon, was not in condition to aid its garrison, as he had besieged the strong town of Usson, which made a stubborn resistance to his efforts to take it. He accordingly withdrew from its investment, and, marching into Poitou, took the towns of Bressnire, Chauvigny, Montcontour, and Montmorillon.

In these successful sieges he had procured some powerful engines, and with these he returned to the siege of Usson. These engines, brought on waggons from Rion and Clermont with other formidable preparations, so impressed the garrison with his determination to carry the place by storm, that they proposed terms of surrender, which were accepted.*

These successes had just been completed when the Constable was summoned to Paris by Charles V. to aid in negotiations then in progress with Charles the Bad of Navarre. These negotiations related to a treaty which Charles the Bad had made with the King of France on the 29th of March, 1370, and which he had until that time evaded signing and

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., pp. 627, 628.

† *Idem.*, pp. 630, 631.

ratifying. This treaty concerned those parts of Normandy which Charles the Bad controlled.

On the 2d of September, 1370, he had also concluded a treaty with Edward III. of England without the slightest consideration for that made with the King of France, granting him equally advantageous access to the same ports. He was, however, unable to fulfil his treaty with Edward, and consequently returned to negotiations with Charles V.

On the 25th of March, 1371, Du Guesclin escorted to Charles the Bad the hostages which he had demanded from the King of France; after which, under escort of the Constable, he went to Vernon to meet the King of France, and five days later concluded the treaty, and did homage to Charles V. as his liege lord.

The disorders which had been so violent in Poitou, and which had been caused by the troops of the Duke of Lancaster and the Free Companies, had assumed grave proportions. The Constable, taking leave of the King, pushed an active campaign in this district, as well as in Rouergue and along the frontiers of Limousin. In a brief but successful campaign he had taken a number of towns and fortresses held by the English.

Having in a considerable measure restored order, he returned to Pontorson in May, 1371, and occupied himself with the collection of a large force of soldiers.

The continued successes of Du Guesclin, and the steady decline of English prestige in France, led Edward III. to seek new alliances by whch he might strengthen himself. He was very desirous of lessening the growing popularity of Charles V. and

his valiant Constable, which filled him with apprehension. He sought these alliances among the most powerful of the Breton and French nobles, and was especially anxious to form an offensive and defensive alliance with the Duc de Brétagne, since access by the Ports controlled by him gave a ready means of entry into France. The Duc de Brétagne did not dare to enter into an open alliance of this nature, although Edward offered as an inducement to declare him Duc de Bretagne, and a liege subject of himself as King of France.

Charles V. was aware of these negotiations, and was planning accordingly. In Sir Olivier de Clisson he now had a devoted subject and a powerful ally. In his early career De Clisson had been attached to the English cause, and had rendered it most important service. But John de Montfort had estranged him from it and from his own support by his refusal to grant his requests regarding certain lands which he desired, and in other ways.

Embracing the cause of the widow of Charles de Blois against the Duke de Montfort, he swore allegiance to the King of France. Charles V. was not slow to recognise the importance of such a gain to his support. He restored to him the estates of his father which had been sequestered after his execution, and treated him with distinguished consideration, making him Lieutenant-Commander of Touraine, Maine, and Anjou. He was thus in such relation with the affairs of Brittany as to be enabled to keep the King of France, into whose counsels he was admitted, well advised of all important matters transpiring in that province.

The cause of Edward III. in France was still further compromised by the marriage of the Duke of Lancaster and the Earl of Cambridge with the two daughters of Peter the Cruel, who had been left in English hands as hostages for the payment of his indebtedness to the Black Prince. These two daughters of Peter were by Maria de Padilla; and the Duke of Lancaster, in marrying Constance, the elder, hoped to obtain a claim to the throne of Castile; while the marriage of his brother with the younger sister, Isabel, was considered to strengthen still further the English cause. But the contrary proved to be the case. The transaction served to cement the alliance between the Kings of France and Castile against the King of England.

The year 1371 was not destined to close without the passage of a deep cloud of sorrow over the brightness of the universal manifestations of affection for the Constable, and expressions of appreciation of his brilliant service to his country. Under his successful campaigns, English prestige was rapidly declining, and he was cheered by the assurances of confidence and esteem accorded to him on every side. But in his home the shadow of death darkened his hearthstone. Tiphaine Raguenel, his wife, died at Pontorson.

She had been a source of strength and encouragement to him in the eventful years following their marriage. All of the chroniclers who mention her uniformly bear testimony to her beauty and worth. From the days when, starting out upon his career, without fame or fortune, he had met her at Dinan, and under her encouragement had been stimulated

to successful feats of arms, and had won her as his wife, until death closed her career, she had rejoiced in his triumphs, and had shared his sorrows when unfortunate. During his long absences on his expeditions, and in the dreary months of his imprisonment by the Black Prince, she had wisely and successfully administered the affairs of his estates. Having received the best education accorded to women of that time, her judgment and many virtues, together with her fine presence, led her to appear on all occasions with becoming grace.

Sharing the fondness of her husband for a most generous hospitality, she was ever ready to further his liberality, which, according to the manners of the time, drew men strongly to him.

Tiphaine was one of those devoted natures who find their fullest satisfaction in the success and glory of their husbands. During his prolonged absences in the campaigns which had won for him so much of fame, she had occupied herself with studies of a higher order. Much interested in astronomy, she had dipped into astrology, which was so fully credited by many at that time.

Some have maintained that she was able to predict his successes, and foresee events favourable or unfavourable for others; but we must look upon such statements in the same manner as Du Guesclin is said to have expressed himself when informed of some of them, as being "the dreams of a woman." * She died during the year 1371, and was buried near Pontorson in the church of the old monastery at Mont Saint Michel.

* Luce, *Hist. de Bert. du Guesclin*, p. 401.

The aggressive and successful campaigns of Du Guesclin in 1371 against the possessions of the English in France, and especially in Aquitaine, compelled Edward III. to make strenuous efforts to sustain his waning prestige and retrieve his extensive losses of land and fortresses. He planned an expedition for invasion of France, which, consisting of a large number of troops and a considerable fleet of vessels, set sail in the early part of 1372 from Southampton. This force was under command of the Earl of Pembroke, and was directed against Rochelle.

Their arrival was anticipated by a strong fleet of Spanish vessels, which the King of Castile had despatched in response to the requests of Charles V. for aid. A naval engagement was the result, and, after a sea fight continuing for a part of two days, the English were defeated, losing a large number of men and vessels, with a considerable amount of treasure which the fleet was carrying for the payment of troops already in France.

At this time appeared a character who figured with some prominence in the warlike events of the succeeding two or three years. Evan of Wales, so called from his claim to have descended from the house of that name, had espoused the cause of Charles V., and at the time of the naval events off Rochelle had set out from France in command of a force estimated at three thousand men-at-arms, with several vessels. He sailed directly for the island of Guernsey, upon which he made an attack, and overcame and defeated the English forces gathered to oppose him. The Governor was forced to shut him-

self up in a fortress, to which Evan immediately laid siege

While thus engaged, he was recalled by Charles V., and sent upon a mission to the King of Castile to induce him to send a fleet to co-öperate in movements against Rochelle.*

With the aid and advice of Du Guesclin, Charles V. was preparing to follow his recent success with active operations elsewhere. His army was placed under the general orders of Du Guesclin, who assumed command of fifteen hundred men-at-arms and six hundred bowmen. The Duc de Bourbon was placed at the head of eight hundred men-at-arms and two hundred bowmen; and the valiant Maréchal Louis de Sancerre, was given a command of five hundred men-at-arms. The remainder of the force, amounting to five hundred men-at-arms, was placed under command of Lord Sempy, and was held in the vicinity of Calais.

The army under command of Du Guesclin contained many distinguished knights and leaders, among whom we find the names of Lords de Clisson, de Laval, and de Beaumanoir, the Duc de Berri, the Vicomte de Rohan, and many others. Setting out from Blois, he marched into the province of Poitou, and captured the fortresses of Montmorillon and Chauvigny, and also the fortified town of Lussac.

At the same time that he was conducting these operations, he detached Lord de Clisson with a strong force to make a reconnaissance about the

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 640.

fortress of Montcontour, which had been retaken by the English in 1376.*

After six days of active operations against the castle, De Clisson failed to gain any advantage. The English commander of the fortress had hung upon the walls a representation of the shield and arms of Du Guesclin reversed, and had declared him to be a false and perjured chevalier. †

Information of this insult incensed the Constable, and, taking his entire force, he joined Lord de Clisson before Montcontour.

The insult thus offered him was because he had not discharged an obligation to the English knight for ransom of one of his soldiers, for which he had become liable after the battle of Navarrete. Admitting its existence, the Constable claimed that the matter was one of honourable record under seal, and could be adjusted at any time, and that the insult offered was wanton.

Preparations to carry the fortress by assault were pushed rapidly forward, the ditches were filled with wood and branches of trees, and the troops were thus enabled to reach the foot of the walls. On the sixth day the garrison offered terms of capitulation, and the Governor of the castle was surrendered to De Clisson, who hung him upon the wall, in the place where he had hung the caricature of Du Guesclin's arms; and the garrison and castle passed into the hands of the Constable. ‡

At this point he learned that the garrison of Poitiers had been re-enforced by troops under Sir John

* Cuvelhier, v. 19665. † *Idem.*, v. 19682.

‡ *Idem.*, v. 19731.

Devereaux and Sir Thomas Percy. He accordingly moved forward to join the Ducs de Bourbon and de Berri, who were engaged in the siege of St. Sevère. Before reaching the latter city he captured a number of towns and castles. His entire force was gathered about St. Sevère, and his army of investment amounted to upwards of four thousand men-at-arms.

The strength of the walls and means of defence demanded careful and extensive preparations, on the part of the Constable, to overcome them. While these were in progress, the final action was precipitated in an unexpected manner. The details are given by Cuvelhier as follows:*

Geoffroi Payen and a number of squires were upon the edge of the moat, examining the defences of the castle. Payen bore upon his shoulder a battle-axe. The earth giving way caused him to slip and lose hold of his battle-axe, which fell into the water. Payen at once sought to recover it, and called to the men upon the walls not to shoot their arrows at him while making an effort to secure it. This they declined to listen to, and declared that he should never regain his battle-axe. To this Payen angrily replied: "By the just God! without my axe I can neither drink nor eat, nor can I sleep or watch without it. Have my axe, I will! at whatever cost." †

Calling upon nine of his companions, they joined hands, and, sustained thus, he endeavoured to reach it. The weight proving too great for the one upon the bank, he broke his hold, and the remaining nine

* Cuvelhier, Part II., v. 19834. † *Idem.*, v. 19999 *et seq.*

fell into the moat. Clambering out upon the other side, they rushed to the foot of the walls to take some revenge upon those who were sending numbers of arrows against them. Their companions on the opposite side rushed to their rescue.

Du Guesclin learned of this unexpected commencement of the siege while at dinner. Upsetting the table in his haste, he immediately disposed his forces for the attack in support of the party already engaged. The garrison was well prepared with every means of resistance, but the assault was pressed with great vigour, and at many points simultaneously. The walls were broken in several places, and finally a considerable breach was effected. This was defended with great obstinacy. The demand of Du Guesclin for an unconditional surrender was met with a request for a parley, in which his terms were not accepted, and the assault was renewed with increased energy.

A portion of the forces led by the Abbot of Malpaye * effected an entrance through a breach, and, setting fire to a barn filled with hay, caused such a diversion as favoured the movements of the scaling parties, and the forces of the Constable gained entry to the town, which was surrendered. †

The assault upon and capture of St. Sevère is referred to by several chroniclers as one most remarkable for instances of personal prowess and skill at arms. The leading of the troops by their commanders in person inspired them to remarkable

* Sir Alain de Taillecol, known as the "Abbot of Malpaye."—Du Chastelet.

† Cuvelhier, v. 20348 *et seq.*, v. 20392.

feats of daring. The brilliancy of the assault is emphasised by the absence of the usual preparations for protection of the besieging party, and the unexpected manner in which it was precipitated.

The capture of the city not only gave Du Guesclin an important fortress, but afforded the captors a rich return for their efforts. Large quantities of stores, money, armour, and other valuables, had been gathered here. All the English prisoners taken were admitted to ransom, but the French were executed.*

While the capture of St. Sevère was so fortunate for the French, it was a correspondingly severe loss to the English. Upon English prestige it exerted a depressing effect, on account of the surrender of a place strongly fortified, and equipped with every means for resisting a siege, and one in which had been gathered for safe keeping the large booty taken by the Free Companies during a long period.

Sir John Devereaux, the Governor of Rochelle, learning of Du Guesclin's movement to join the French army about St. Sevère, had immediately sought to secure a force with which to raise the siege. He accordingly communicated with the Captal de Buch and Sir Thomas Percy, who at once commenced to gather troops for the purpose. The Captal de Buch, with a force of nine hundred men-at-arms and five hundred archers, collected mainly in Poitou, hastened to the relief of the beleaguered fortress; but his movement was too late, as he encountered the remnants of the defeated garrison as he approached the city.

* Cuvelhier, Part II., v. 20441 *et seq.*

Du Guesclin, soon after the capture of St. Sevère, while in Limousin, received information from citizens of Poitiers of their desire to throw off the English rule and to come under that of the King of France. He decided to go at once and meet the wishes of the French citizens, and aid them in securing control of the city. He left the Ducs de Bourbon and de Berri in command of his army, and, taking a force of three hundred chosen lances, he pushed on by a forced march to Poitiers by slightly travelled and circuitous roads.

The absence of Sir John Devereaux and Sir Thomas Percy favoured his plans. By a march of thirty leagues in a day and a night, he reached Poitiers, and was cordially received by the citizens. The Captal de Buch, fearing for the safety of Poitiers in the absence of its commandant, had despatched Sir Jean d'Angle with a detachment of knights to re-enforce the garrison; but he was prevented by the rapid movements of Du Guesclin, and compelled to retreat in order to avoid capture.

The surrender of Poitiers was a crushing blow to the English cause. Aside from the depression caused by the loss of so important a city, the growing desire of the French to throw off all English rule led to divisions in the English councils; and these, in turn, influenced defection from their forces, and terminated in the disbanding of the army of the Captal de Buch.

This disaffection was early recognised by Du Guesclin, who sought by active movements to increase the desire of the French to rid themselves of any English domination. As soon as the final mat-

ters connected with the surrender of Poitiers were settled, he sent a force of three hundred lances, under command of Lord de Pons, against Soubise, a strongly fortified town on the river Charente.

The Captal de Buch was informed of the movement by the commandant of the castle, and set out with a strong force to aid the garrison. Evan of Wales, whose mission to Henry of Castile had been successful, and who was then off the coast near Rochelle with a squadron of Spanish vessels, learned of the movements of the Captal de Buch. Taking a force of four hundred men-at-arms, he ascended the Charente in boats as far as Soubise. Concealing his troops, he awaited the arrival of the Captal de Buch. The latter, with two hundred men-at-arms, arrived near the camp of the French toward evening. Suddenly attacking the command of Lord de Pons, he succeeded in slaying and capturing the entire command.

Tidings of this affair were brought to Evan of Wales by his scouts. He immediately withdrew his men from their concealment, and falling upon the English camp, his men bearing torches and shouting their war-cries, he threw their entire force into a panic. Attacking them fiercely, he speedily captured the entire body of English, including the Captal de Buch, who was made prisoner by Pierre Longvillers, a squire of Evan of Wales, and was soon after placed in the hands of the King of France, in whose custody he was kept a prisoner until the time of his death, five years later.* Charles refused every proposal for his ransom, and

* Froissart, Liv. I,, Part II., p. 712.

rejected the very liberal offer of Edward III. for his release, as well as the requests of many French chevaliers who sympathised with him in his claims for the privilege of ransom.

Charles had more than a personal motive in declining to admit the Captal de Buch to ransom. He was the only leader whom the English then possessed capable of meeting the irresistible campaigns of Du Guesclin. To the English cause in Aquitaine his capture was a blow from which it never recovered.

The Constable gave his enemies no time to regain confidence. He immediately despatched a force under Lord de Clisson, with the Lords de Laval, de Beaumanoir, de Pons, and the Vicomte de Rohan, against some of the fortresses in Angoumois and Saintonge. This body consisted mainly of Bretons and Poitevins, and numbered about five hundred men-at-arms.

They first marched against St. Jean d'Angely; but, the garrison having lost its commander, the Captal de Buch surrendered without resistance. Immediately following, the city of Angoulême and Taillebourg also surrendered upon summons. The town of Saintes was next besieged. This refused to surrender, and prepared to resist a siege. A single day of assault, together with the demands of the French sympathisers in the garrison, compelled its governor, Sir William Fermiton, to listen to terms of capitulation, and to surrender.

These continued successes, rapidly succeeding each other, led the city of Pons to surrender as soon as the troops appeared before it. Du Guesclin,

taking advantage of the deepening depression of his adversaries, pushed his movements to obtain important points with unabating energy.

The city of Rochelle was a most necessary acquisition, and to its attainment he devoted himself. With Evan of Wales, who was blockading it with the Spanish fleet and forces, he joined in negotiation for its surrender. A strong desire prevailed among the population of the city, which was mainly French, to return under the sovereignty of the French King.

A deputation, secretly sent to Du Guesclin by the citizens, proposed the surrender of the place on condition that certain privileges should be assured. He accordingly entered into their plans to secure possession of the city.

When Sir John Devereaux, the Governor, had left the city to aid in raising the siege of St. Sevère, he had placed in charge of the defences a squire, named Philippe Mansel, an expert man-at-arms. The Mayor of the city, who was strongly French in his sympathies, planned with a number of the leading citizens to deceive Mansel, and to gain possession of the castle and of the town by strategy.

Inviting Mansel to dine, he laid before him a document purporting to be from Edward III., and bearing the great seal of England. As Mansel was unable to read, a clerk of the Mayor was called upon to read the contents of the letter. He had been previously instructed as to the part he was to play. Accordingly he read the letter as coming from Edward III., and commanding the Mayor to order a muster of all the men-at-arms at Rochelle in order

to report to him the number of the effective forces for defence. Further, the Mayor proposed after the muster to pay the troops the wages then due. Mansel, without any suspicion, consented to order the muster required.

The Mayor secretly placed a large body of armed men in concealment near the place of muster. On the following day, when the garrison had marched out of the castle and formed for review, the troops who had been concealed appeared between them and the castle. The Mayor and his attendants rode swiftly away, leaving the garrison at the mercy of the troops. Finding themselves placed in a hopeless condition, they surrendered and were disarmed.*

As soon as Du Guesclin learned of the capture of Rochelle by the citizens, after consulting with the Ducs de Bourbon and de Berri, he sent to learn what the desire of the Rochellois for the future might be.

After a conference, a deputation consisting of twelve distinguished citizens was sent by the people of Rochelle to Charles V. at Paris, to state that they desired to yield allegiance to the King of France, but were only willing to do so on certain conditions. The principal of these were: the destruction of the citadel; that the city should be held in perpetuity as a part of the domain of France; that their money should be coined of the same value as that of Paris; and that no impost or tax should be laid upon them without their consent; and that Charles V. should, at his own expense, procure their absolution by the Pope from their oath of service to Edward III.

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., pp. 651–653.

After many efforts to modify these demands, Charles granted them. Pending these negotiations, the Ducs de Bourbon and de Berri had rejoined Du Guesclin at Poitiers. As soon as he learned of the submission of the Rochellois, he left Poitiers, taking a force of one hundred lances, and went to Rochelle, where he was warmly welcomed by the citizens. After a stay of a few days, sufficiently long to arrange all matters of importance, he returned to Poitiers.

Having settled upon his next movements, he set out from Poitiers, accompanied by many of his most accomplished leaders, to quiet disturbances in the neighbourhood of Rochelle. Several castles in this vicinity were still held by the English, and were sources of constant menace to the surrounding country. With a force of two thousand lances, he besieged the Castle of Benon, which was defended by a strong garrison, and was well supplied for a siege. During the preparations for assault a party of men-at-arms from the neighbouring castle of Surgières made a night attack upon a portion of the forces of Du Guesclin, and escaped to their castle. Several of the French were killed, and among them Geoffroi Payen, a favourite squire of De Clisson, who had distinguished himself at the siege of St. Sevère.*

His death greatly angered Du Guesclin, who took an oath never to leave Benon until he had captured it.

On the following day, after the funeral and rites of the squire had been performed, he ordered an

* Cuvelhier, v. 21719.

assault upon the castle, which he led in person, and which proved successful after an obstinate resistance. The entire garrison was executed by Lord de Clisson's orders.*

Marching from Benon to the Castle of Marant, not far distant, its governor and garrisons surrendered without resistance as soon as he appeared. Pushing on to Surgières, he found that castle evacuated by its garrison, which had fled on his approach. The strongly fortified town of Fontenay le Compte was next invested. The siege continued for some time, when the garrison offered to surrender on being allowed to retire with their property.

From this point Du Guesclin returned to Poitiers, where he commenced preparations to undertake the siege of Thouars. These were soon completed, and at the head of an army of three thousand lances and four thousand other troops, including a large number of bowmen, he marched rapidly to Thouars, which he invested closely. After a careful examination of its fortifications, he decided that the strength of the garrison was such that attempt to take it by assault would involve great loss of life, and that the reduction of the city by a close siege and cutting off all supplies would be the most desirable course to pursue.

The garrison comprised a large number of the knights and barons of Poitou, who had been constant in their allegiance to Edward of England. Recognising the plans of Du Guesclin in the disposition of his forces, they foresaw the certainty of his success. A council of the lords and the authorities

* Cuvelhier, v. 21836.

of the city led them to consider the wisdom of making terms with the Constable, if possible, by which they might honourably retreat from their present unfortunate condition.

Aside from the almost inevitable result of Du Guesclin's plans, they were influenced by the uninterrupted success of his arms and the rapidly growing power of the King of France. On every side they saw that the English were being driven from their possessions, and they also recognised the growing desire of the people to come once more under the sovereignty of France. These influences combined to lead their council to the adoption of a proposition for conditional surrender.

Du Guesclin and the Duc de Berri entered into negotiations with the authorities, which were continued for some time. The Governor of Thouars was anxious to gain as much delay as he could, in the hope that Edward III. might come to the relief of its garrison. This Du Guesclin recognised, and strove to make the interval as short as possible.

The 29th of September following was finally fixed upon for a conditional surrender. By this agreement the inhabitants of Thouars were to remain closely besieged; and if Edward, or one of his sons, should fail to come and "keep the day" with a force sufficient to hold Thouars against the French before the day named, the city and all within it should become subject to the King of France. Messengers were at once sent to Edward III. by the authorities of Thouars, urging him to come to their relief.

While Du Guesclin had been prosecuting this successful campaign, De Montfort was pursuing

secret negotiations with the King of England, in spite of his treaty with Charles V. and his professions of allegiance. On the 19th of July, 1372, he concluded a treaty with Edward III., by which both parties to the treaty entered into an offensive and defensive alliance against the King of France, and each further agreed to enter into no treaty without the consent of the other.*

Meanwhile the Duc de Brétagne attempted to gain to his interest a number of the lords and barons of the province. He succeeded with a few; but the Lords de Clisson, de Laval, and the Vicomte de Rohan, and others of the most powerful, were devoted in their allegiance to the King of France. They were already much irritated against the Duc de Brétagne on account of his continued friendly relations with the King of England, and also on account of the number of English persons by whom he was surrounded. Their Franco-Breton loyalty led them to suspect his every movement; and, instead of listening to his proposals to join his party, they threatened to drive the English from his territories, and himself with them if he continued his secret alliances with the enemies of France.

The appeal of the citizens of Thouars to Edward III. reached him while he was preparing for an invasion of France, which he had designed to place under the command of the Duke of Lancaster. On learning the condition of Thouars, he changed his plans, and decided to extend the proportions of his expedition, and to lead it himself.

Arranging the affairs of his realm for an absence,

* Rymer, vol. iii., p. 953.

and placing his grandson, Richard, nominally in charge of the kingdom during his absence on the expedition, he prepared to set sail from Sandwich, September 1, 1372. His forces consisted of four thousand men-at-arms and ten thousand bowmen, with four hundred vessels of all sizes. For four weeks he was prevented by adverse winds from effecting a landing on the French coast, and with increasing anxiety and discouragement he saw the 29th day of September arrive and pass without being able to land upon the soil of France. Greatly disheartened, he was compelled to return to his own shores, thus adding another to the rapidly increasing list of failures and disasters which had recently befallen him.

During the siege of Thouars, in anticipation of the relief expedition of Edward III., a force of English and Gascons had been assembled by Sir Thomas Felton in the vicinity of Bordeaux with the intention of co-operating with the movements of Edward after he should land. This force was, however, too small to cope with any detachment which Du Guesclin might send against it.

After the failure of Edward to relieve the garrison of Thouars, Sir Thomas Felton endeavoured to persuade the authorities of Thouars and the knights of Poitou, then in the city, to join their forces with his own, and offer battle to the Constable after they should have evacuated Thouars.

This they declined to do, both on account of their promise to become subjects of the King of France, and because they saw the hopelessness of such a measure. They knew, in part, the activity of the

Constable during the period of siege. In anticipation of an effort by Edward to raise the siege, and in view of attempts at co-operation from other sources, he had steadily increased his forces, until by September 29th, the day on which the agreement terminated, he had an army which amounted to fifteen thousand men-at-arms and thirty thousand troops beside, made up of bowmen and foot-soldiers. With these troops were the most renowned chevaliers of Auvergne, Normandy, Brittany, Touraine, Blois, Anjou, and other sections. It was a force which, led by Du Guesclin, was able to cope successfully with any army which could be brought against it. The city of Thouars accordingly surrendered, and its inhabitants and defenders swore allegiance to the King of France.

After the surrender of Thouars was effected, the Constable returned to Poitiers with the larger part of his forces. Lord de Clisson, with a strong body of men-at-arms, laid siege to the Castle of Mortagne, which was one of the few still held by the English in this province. The garrison, knowing that they could not long maintain themselves unaided, sent for assistance to the knights of the garrison of Niort, the only town in the district still held by the English. Among the men-at-arms of this garrison were a number of English and Gascon knights, who conceived the plan of surprising De Clisson and making him a prisoner. Assembling a body of five hundred lances, they set out to reach the vicinity of Mortagne by a forced march and with the utmost secrecy.

Lord de Clisson was too good a general not to

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Lord de Clisson was too good a general not to

watch his flanks and rear, and to guard against surprise. The expedition, though secretly and rapidly pushed forward, failed to reach Lord de Clisson's forces as soon as a spy whom he kept at Niort to watch the movements of that garrison. Being notified in advance of the arrival of the surprise party, he withdrew his forces in safety, though compelled to leave his camp, which the attacking party found deserted, to their great chagrin in charging upon it. After leaving Mortagne with his forces, he rejoined the Constable at Poitiers.*

During these concluding months of the campaign, matters in Brittany had been by no means quiet. Aside from the secret efforts which the Duc de Bretagne was making to conclude a treaty with the King of England, he was at the same time collecting troops to aid his intended invasion of France. The suspicions of the Breton barons of the existence of these covert alliances with the English were confirmed by the movement of the Duc to Brissac, in Anjou, at the head of a strong force, apparently to go to the aid of the English in Poitou. Charles V. immediately instructed the Constable to invade Brittany. Du Guesclin, taking four thousand men-at-arms, entered the province, and pushed rapidly forward as far as Rennes. The Duc de Bretagne hastily withdrew, fearing to meet the Constable. On reaching the vicinity of Rennes, Du Guesclin had learned that the Duchesse de Bretagne had just left the city for Vannes. With the Duc de Bourbon, at the head of a strong force, he started in pursuit, and soon overtook and captured her escort.

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., pp. 660, 661.

In her possession were found, among other matters of importance, the articles of agreement between Edward III. and the Duc de Bretagne. The Duchesse was sent to one of her own castles, after which the Constable marched to Redon with his army, whence, after an interview with a number of the Breton barons, he withdrew with his forces from the province and returned to Poitiers.

During these latter events, the Duc de Bretagne, unable to undertake any offensive or defensive efforts, awaited the coming of the detachment of troops sent to his aid by Edward III. With these came his ambassador bringing the treaty for signature. As soon as the Constable had withdrawn from the province, the Duc de Bretagne met Lord Neufville, the English envoy, at St. Mahé, where he had landed with his forces, and ratified the treaty on the 22d of November, 1372.

These acts were a source of great displeasure to the Breton lords, who were incensed both by the arrival of an English force hostile to the King of France, and also by the alliance of the Duc de Bretagne with them.

CHAPTER XII.

HE DRIVES THE ENGLISH FROM BRITTANY.

1372–1374.

Du Guesclin invades Brittany—Siege of Chizey—Success of the campaign—Du Guesclin returns to Poitiers—Edward III. again invades Brittany—Du Guesclin sent to oppose him—Success of his campaign—Capture of Duval—Siege of Hennebon—Surrender of Nantes—Edward III. invades France—Complete failure of the expedition—Efforts at peace by Gregory XI.—The English remnant reaches Bordeaux.

THE winter following the close of his operations in Brittany was spent by Du Guesclin in considering and maturing plans for a vigorous campaign to commence early in the following spring. He was also occupied in the arrangement of matters connected with his own affairs, especially those between Charles V. and himself regarding their mutual indebtedness. The last of these matters was completed on the 15th of February, 1373.

In the earliest days of spring he collected his forces, and leaving Poitiers with fifteen hundred combatants, chiefly Bretons, he laid siege to the town and fortress of Chizey, of which Sir Robert Miton and Sir Martin Scot were captains.* With

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 622.

Du Guesclin were many Breton leaders, among whom were Sir Olivier de Mauny, Messires Robert, Alain, and Jean de Beaumanoir, Sir Geoffroi, de Ricon, Sir Thébaut du Pont, Sir Geffroi de Quarimel, Sir Alain de St. Pol, and many others. He surrounded the fortress and strengthened his own position by a ditch and palisades, with outposts to guard against surprise. Several attempts were made upon the walls with little success. The garrison, feeling that they could not sustain a prolonged siege, succeeded in sending a messenger to Sir John Devereaux, commanding the English garrison at Niort, about four leagues distant, begging him to come to their aid. They also informed him of Du Guesclin's position, and that he had but five hundred soldiers.

Calling upon the garrison of Gensay and Lusignan for re-enforcements, Sir Thomas Devereaux assembled a force of seven hundred and three men-at-arms and three hundred foot-soldiers from Poitou and Brittany, and set out from Niort.*

Before starting, one Jaconelle, captain of Chievray, addressed Sir John Devereaux as follows: "Baron, listen to what I say; we are about to attack Bertrand. I vow to God, St. Peter, and St. Nicholas! that in the midst of his people I will take him and lead him a prisoner to Niort; and if I cannot take him alive, I will take him dead! I will cover my armour with white linen and bear upon my shoulder a red cross of St. George." To this Sir John Devereaux replied, "I will do the same." The tunic was then adopted by the entire party. †

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 663.

† Cuvelhier, vv. 22050–22065.

Lord de Clisson, who had been sent with a strong force to besiege Roche sur Yon, learned of the plans of Sir John Devereaux, and sent a messenger to the Constable, apprising him of his danger. * Du Guesclin made his preparations accordingly.

Sir John Devereaux had expected by forced marches to surprise the Constable, and to attack him in front, while the garrison of Chizey would co-operate during the engagement. Reaching the vicinity of Chizey, he halted to allow his men to rest and to mature his plan of attack. While under the cover of a wood near the road, two waggons, loaded with wine for the French troops, approached, and were captured by his soldiers. The heads of the casks were knocked in, and the wine was drunk from every available vessel, even the helmets of the soldiers. The effect of the wine upon his troops soon modified his plans. He had intended a night attack, but they were clamorous to be led against the French immediately. These counsels prevailed. Deceived as to the numbers of the forces of the Constable, he sent him a challenge to meet him in open battle. On consultation with his leaders, Du Guesclin decided to accept the challenge, and made immediate preparations for the battle. His military sagacity is well shown in his dispositions for the struggle, and his promptness to take advantage of developments during the action.

His position had been strengthened by palisades and a ditch. Gathering his troops in line behind these, he detached Sir Jean de Beaumont with eighty lances, and placed them in concealment,

* Cuvelhier, v. 21940.

where they could watch and check any effort of the garrison to co-operate with the troops of Sir John Devereaux. This detachment was hidden in his camp in his rear. Sir John Devereaux opened the battle by sending forward his three hundred Breton and Poitevin skirmishers. When these had reached his lines, and his leaders learned that they were Bretons, Du Guesclin called upon them to leave the English and return to their proper service of the King of France, threatening that if they did not do so they should receive no quarter.*

They readily returned to their French associations, and joined the troops of Du Guesclin. From them he learned the number of the forces of Sir John Devereaux. He immediately changed his plan of battle. Directing Sir Alain de Beaumanoir and Sir Geoffroi de Quarimel each to take one hundred lances, and be ready to strike the enemy on both flanks and rear as soon as he should engage him in front, he ordered the barriers to be cut down, and led the attack in person. †

Sir John Devereaux saw that his skirmishers had deserted him, and that he had misjudged the numbers and strength of his opponents, but he met the attack of the Constable with firmness. The garrison of Chizey at this point sallied out to aid Sir John Devereaux, but were quickly defeated and captured by the force under Sir Jean de Beaumont. This result was communicated to Du Guesclin, who at once ordered his flanking columns, under Sir Alain de Beaumanoir and Sir Geoffroi de Quarimel, to

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 664.

† Cuvelhier, v. 22228 *et seq.*

move upon the English lines, while he pressed them with renewed vigour in front, his troops shouting their battle-cries of "*Mountjoy! St. Denis!*" "*Notre Dame! Guesclin!*"

During this part of the battle he was attacked by Jaconelle, who had sworn to take him prisoner. But Du Guesclin, seizing him by the visor and raising him from the ground, struck him a blow in the eye with his dagger which destroyed it, and, throwing him behind him, called to some of his followers, "Kill this ribald for me, he annoys me!" *

Sir John Devereaux, seeing that further resistance was hopeless, surrendered with the remainder of his force, among whom were more than three hundred knights and squires. The forces of the English and the garrison having been defeated and captured, the town and castle were promptly occupied by the troops of the Constable. This occurred on the 21st of March, 1373.

Leaving a sufficient garrison in the town and Castle of Chizey, the Constable prepared to move upon Niort immediately, which he hoped to take without assault. Stripping the tunics of white cloth from the followers of Sir John Devereaux, he caused his own men to put them on. Mounting them upon the horses captured from the English, he started for Niort, and soon appeared before its barriers. The garrison, seeing a body of men-at-arms mounted upon the horses which had been ridden by the English and bearing their pennons, and covered with the white tunic with the red cross of St. George upon the shoulder, supposed them to be

* Cuvelhier, v. 22444 *et seq.*

the English force returning. They immediately opened the gates and admitted them to the city.*

After a rest of four days at Niort, the Constable resumed his march and reached the Castle of Lusignan, which he found deserted by its garrison, who had fled after hearing of the result of the battle of Chizey. He took it without resistance, and, leaving a sufficient force to garrison it, advanced to the Castle Achard, which was held by the wife of Lord Guiscard d'Angle, who was then a prisoner in Spain. Her request to be left undisturbed was granted; and the Constable pushed on to Mortmer, which he besieged. This was soon yielded by the Dame de Mortmer, who commanded it, and was placed by her with that of Dienne under the King of France.

There were left at this time in Poitou but two or three castles which were not in possession of the French. With these exceptions, all had been taken from the English, and their garrisons had been driven out.

This active and successful campaign terminated, Du Guesclin returned to Poitiers, where he was the recipient of a most cordial welcome. Disbanding his army, he went with the Ducs de Berri, de Bourbon, and de Bourgogne to Paris for a council with Charles V. Here, as elsewhere, he was met with every demonstration of affection and admiration by the people. This growing enthusiasm in the success of the Constable, and expressions of affection for

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 666. This event has undoubtedly been the basis of some of the romances referred to the "White Company."

him, were not simply popular applause for a successful leader. They arose from a deeper feeling. The common people looked upon him as a friend and a deliverer, who had undertaken their cause against those who had despoiled and oppressed them, and had driven out the invader and secured to them protection and safety. To the French people at large, and especially the barons and leaders, he had shown that the disasters of Crécy, of Poitiers, and other defeats, were not due to lack of courage, but to want of military skill and generalship. He had taught them that with it they could conquer the invader and place France once more in the hands of Frenchmen, and that united France would soon take her place at the head of the nations.

He had fully sympathised in and appreciated the view held by Charles V., that France to be strong must be united, and that the petty sovereignties of the princes, with their attendant jealousies, should become merged into a broad central authority of the King, which should recognise the rights of the princes and barons, while at the same time it fostered a spirit of patriotism and an unyielding loyalty to the Government of France.

In pursuing his policy of driving the English entirely from France, Charles V. decided that an important aid in the accomplishment of this result would be the termination of all relations with the Duc de Bretagne, and the removal from that province of so dangerous an enemy to the peace and unity of France. His secret dealings with Edward III. and the treaty which he had recently concluded with him, while professing loyalty to the King of

France, were in themselves causes for rupture of all relations with him. But events were occurring which soon gave him occasion to break all truce with him, and to undertake measures to drive him from Brittany, and to confiscate his possessions in that province.

The utter failure of his expedition of invasion led Edward III. to renew the attempt to retrieve his extensive losses and regain his fallen prestige. He accordingly fitted out an expedition, which he placed under command of the Earl of Salisbury. This was directed to follow the movements of the conjoined French and Spanish fleets under Evan of Wales, and also to co-operate with any movements of the Duc de Bretagne in support of the English cause in France.

This fleet reached the French coast at St. Malo. In its harbour they found seven Spanish ships with cargoes of goods. These were destroyed, and their crews were slaughtered. Entering the town of St. Malo, they plundered it, and carried away considerable booty.

The feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the Breton barons and lords with the Duc de Bretagne and his relations with the English now broke out into open hostility. This last act of the English fleet was attributed to him; and the Breton lords angrily repudiated their allegiance to him, and closed their fortresses and towns against him. Charles V. was prompt to take advantage of these conditions. To the request of the Breton lords that he raise an army and take the field against the Duc de Bretagne and his English allies, he gave a

willing ear and ready assent. Calling Du Guesclin into council, he directed him to raise a strong force immediately, with which to enter Brittany and take possession of the entire province.

Nothing could have been more agreeable to the Constable, who promptly assembled an army at Angers, consisting of four thousand lances and ten thousand archers and foot-soldiers. With him were the Duc de Bourbon, the Comte d'Alençon, the Comte de Boulogne, Lord de Clisson, the Vicomte de Rohan, Lord de Beaumanoir, and all the great barons of Brittany.*

The news of these movements was communicated to the Duc de Bretagne at Vannes. Hearing of the extensive expedition against him, and fearing that he should be taken prisoner, he fled to Auray, where he spent six days only, not daring to remain and sustain a siege. There not being a town in Brittany or France in which he felt it safe to reside, he left the Duchesse, his wife, with a part of his followers, in the care of a chevalier who was devoted to his cause, Jean Augustin. Hastening to St. Mahé, he was met on his arrival by closed gates and a threatening refusal to admit him. He then went directly to the coast, and embarked for England at Concarneau, and on the 28th of April landed at Cornwall, leaving his possessions in charge of Sir Thomas Knolles.

Du Guesclin, on leaving Angers, marched to Rennes, which at once surrendered to him, and its inhabitants took the oath of allegiance to the King of France. From Rennes he proceeded to Dinan,

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 699.

which also surrendered to him, as Rennes had done. From thence he pushed on to Vannes, which opened its gates and acknowledged submission to France. Here he remained to rest and refresh his Breton and French troops. Leaving Vannes, he marched to the Castle of Succinio, a favourite residence of the Duc de Bretagne. This he besieged. The fortress was held by a garrison of English, and, being strongly devoted to the Duc de Bretagne, prepared for a stubborn defence.* For four days they successfully resisted his efforts, when the fortress was carried by storm and the garrison was executed. The castle was given to one of his squires, a skilful man-at-arms, Evan de Maille.

From Succinio the Constable moved against the city and Castle of Jugon, a most important point. This also surrendered and took the oath of obedience to the King of France. Following this capture he took successively the fortresses of Goy la Foret, Roche Derrien, Ploermel, Château Josselin, Faouet, Guingant, St. Mahé, Garlande, Quimperlé, Quimpercorentan, and other villages in these sections.

The Earl of Salisbury and the English at St. Malo, learning of the progress and success of the Constable, entered their fleet, and sailed for Brest, which was one of the best and strongest harbours on the coast.

At Brest a strong force was already assembled, under Sir Robert Knolles; while the troops of the Earl of Salisbury, who had hurriedly left St. Malo at the time of the departure of the fleet, added still further strength to the garrison. On the way to

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 670.

Brest the Earl of Salisbury had stopped for a day at the Castle of Hennebon, where, under the command of a squire named Thomelin Wick, he left an English garrison of one hundred and twenty men-at-arms.

Du Guesclin reached St. Malo on the day following the withdrawal of the English fleet and troops, and was much disappointed in their having escaped him. Pushing rapidly forward, he besieged the town and Castle of Hennebon, which he found determined to resist him. Preparing for an assault, he went before the barriers, and addressed the inhabitants as follows: "God wills, men of the city, that we can take you; and know ye that if the sun can enter your city, we can do so also; if any of you aid the garrison in the defence, we will cut off the heads of every man, woman, and child in the city!" This so terrified the inhabitants that they refused to aid the garrison. The English, finding that they could get no support from the townspeople, at once concluded that they could not maintain the defence of the place, and sent a herald to the Constable, proposing to surrender, if they and the inhabitants who were favourable to the cause of the Duc de Bretagne might be allowed to leave the fortress with what they could carry of their possessions, and go in safety to Brest. This was accepted by the Constable, and the town and fortress passed into his hands.

Leaving a sufficient garrison in Hennebon, he set out for Nantes. On his route he made a détour in order to capture the Castle of Derval. As this was a stronghold and well garrisoned, he made extensive preparations for the siege.

At this time the Duc d'Anjou, with a force of one thousand lances and four thousand other troops, was pressing the siege of Roche sur Yon, which was held by the English. The withdrawal of the troops of the Constable from the vicinity of Brest led the Earl of Salisbury to leave Brest and embark his army, without his horses, in his fleet, since supplies for the large force then in the city could be obtained only with the greatest difficulty. He withdrew into Guérande in order to rest and recuperate his forces. With him were Lord Neufville, Lord Stapleton, Sir John Devereaux, and others.*

During the siege of Derval many gallant deeds of arms were performed by the chevaliers on each side; but the castellans, Sir Hugh Brooks and his brother, saw the disposition of the Constable, and realised their inability to sustain the siege much longer. They accordingly sent a proposal to him to surrender the fortress if they were not relieved within forty days by a force sufficient to raise the siege.

This proposition Du Guesclin sent to the Duc d'Anjou for his approval. The Duke advised its acceptance; but the Constable added the provision that no one should enter Derval unless accompanied by a force sufficient to raise the siege.

It was further demanded that four hostages should be given by the garrison for the faithful fulfilment of these stipulations. These provisions were accepted by Sir Hugh Brooks, and two knights and two squires were given as hostages, and the truce was signed. Leaving four thousand soldiers to maintain the siege, and sending the hostages to the

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 672.

Duc d'Anjou, the constable with five hundred lances marched to Nantes.

When he arrived before the city, he found the gates closed, and a deputation of the burghers awaiting him between the gates and the barriers. The constable stated that he came in the name of the King of France to take possession of their city, which John de Montfort, called the Duc, had forfeited. The burghers replied that De Montfort was their natural sovereign, and that they had sworn fealty to him; but, if he had forfeited his rights, they were willing to yield to the King of France, on condition, that, if the Duc returned to his province and became a loyal Frenchman, then they might return to their loyalty to him; that in the meantime no revenues or rents should be collected, but they should be retained in trust until they received "other news, which they hoped would better please them." *

They assured the Constable that they were ready to receive him as the envoy of the King of France, and to take oath that they would remain good Frenchmen, and not permit the English to enter their city.

Du Guesclin, who saw in their position one of creditable loyalty to one whom they considered their natural sovereign, said that "he desired nothing else"; and thus the matter was concluded. He entered the city, where he remained eight days. On the ninth he took up his residence in a little village near Nantes, in a beautiful manor upon the Loire, belonging to the Duc de Bretagne. Here he

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 673.

received accounts of the several sieges then in progress in Brittany, and communications also from Charles V.

While these events were occurring in Brittany, John de Montfort had pleaded with Edward III. to send an expedition to the province to aid him in regaining his lost possessions. Edward, since the failure of his expedition to relieve Thouars and to check the brilliant successes of Du Guesclin, had determined to fit out another expedition in the most complete manner for another invasion of France, and to make an attempt to regain some portion of what he had lost of towns and fortresses. He therefore listened to the pleading of the Duc de Montfort, and collected a well-appointed force, variously estimated at from six to sixteen thousand men-at-arms and archers, under the command of the Duke of Lancaster and the Duc de Bretagne.

This expedition was to land at Calais, pass through Picardy, and occupy the county between the Seine and the Loire. Sustaining themselves in Normandy and Brittany by foraging, they were to aid the besieged garrisons of Becherel, St. Sauveur, Brest, and Derval, and meet the French in battle, if they were able to do so. These preparations were completed during the month of June.

Shortly after the arrival of the Constable at Nantes, the fortress of Roche sur Yon had been compelled to surrender to the Duc d'Anjou; and immediately following this event a knight and two squires came to him from Lord de Clisson, bearing an offer of capitulation of the fortress of Brest by Sir Robert Knolles. This agreed to yield the fortress if not

relieved within a month by a force sufficient to raise the siege.

Sir Robert Knolles proposed this in order to gain time, by which he hoped to secure the aid of the troops of the Earl of Salisbury to relieve the siege of Brest, and of his own Castle of Derval. He also anticipated the arrival of aid from Edward III., in response to the request of the Duc de Montfort, which would still further increase his resources. Du Guesclin accepted the proposition upon the giving of hostages, and, awaiting the expiration of the term agreed upon, withdrew the main body of his army toward Nantes.

This withdrawal of the close investment tempted Sir Robert Knolles to break his agreement; and, leaving Brest, he succeeded in entering his Castle of Derval in spite of the express stipulation of the truce to the contrary. At the same time he sent a messenger to the Earl of Salisbury, informing him of the situation.

The Earl of Salisbury immediately left Guérande, embarked his troops, and landed at Brest. His forces amounted to two thousand men-at-arms and two thousand archers. Drawing out from Brest, he selected a position, and arranged his forces in order of battle, spending his days in this order, and returning to his ships at night. A week was passed in this manner. At the end of this time he sent a herald to the Constable with a challenge to meet him in battle, saying that he had come to keep the engagement made by Sir Robert Knolles, and that he was prepared to raise the siege of Brest, and demanded the return of the hostages. To this mes-

sage the Constable replied: "Herald, you bring us good news, and you are welcome. Tell your masters that we have a great desire to fight them, more than they to fight us, but they are not in the place where the treaty was made. Tell them that if they will go there, we will fight them." On considering the message of the Constable, the Earl of Salisbury replied that "they were sailors, and had no horses, and that it was unreasonable that they should go on foot; if the French would send them their horses, that they would go to meet him; if they did not wish to do this, that they should send back their hostages."

To this Du Guesclin replied: "Herald, we need our horses; it is not a reasonable request. Tell them, good friend, that we will not give our enemies that advantage; if it pleased God that we send them our horses, they would keep them, which would be a great outrage; if we were to do this, we should demand good hostages sufficient to repay for our horses." "Truly," said the herald, "I was not instructed on this." The Constable replied: "Since they do not desire to come to meet us, and excuse themselves on the ground that they are sailors, and since they are not at the place at which the treaty was made, tell them when you return that we will give them so much advantage as that we will go to the proper place; let them come there if they will, and we will fight them!"

Du Guesclin, with his leaders and his troops, then moved to a strong position near Brest. When the Earl of Salisbury learned this fact, he sent a herald, proposing to come one, third of the way if the

French would come two-thirds; if they would not do this, they should send back his hostages. Neither party was willing to leave the position taken, and the English thereupon placed a part of their force in the garrison of Brest, and, embarking the remainder, sailed for St. Mahé. No troops were sent to the relief of Derval.*

After the departure of the English, the Constable went to Rennes, where he prepared for the payment of his troops. To meet this, he imposed a tax upon each fire in several of the neighbouring bishoprics: this was levied on the 20th of August. After having arranged these matters, he marched with his forces to Derval, to be prepared for the day set for its surrender, unless relieved before that date. Sir Robert Knolles refused to keep the agreement, although there was no possibility of the arrival of any force in his aid. He claimed that in his absence his lieutenant had no right to make any agreement to surrender the fortress, and that he would not keep such an agreement. The Constable was much surprised at this action, and sent to the Duc d'Anjou for instructions.

The Duc was greatly irritated, and came with all haste to Derval, bringing a strong force of men-at-arms with him. On his arrival he threatened Sir Robert Knolles, that, unless he kept his agreement, he would cause the hostages to be put to death. This made no impression upon the freebooter, and only called forth the reply, that, if the Duc d'Anjou were to do this, he would immediately execute four French chevaliers whom he held for ransom in his castle.

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 676.

The Duc d'Anjou, in spite of the entreaties of his lords and barons, ordered the instant execution of the hostages in front of the castle. Sir Robert Knolles immediately brought the four French prisoners upon a platform in front of one of the windows of his castle, and struck off their heads, throwing their bodies into the moat. The operations at Derval were terminated by the recall of the Constable and the Duc d'Anjou to Paris.*

The Duke of Lancaster, as soon as the preparations for his expedition were complete, sailed for the coast of France in July, and landed at Calais. With him were Lord Edward Spencer, Constable of the English Army, and the Marshals, the Counts of Warwick and of Suffolk, and the Count of Stafford, with other notable barons. They marched through Picardy by easy stages, passing Guines, Ardres, and the Castle of Montoire without attacking them. They also passed by St. Omer and St. Pol. Near St. Quentin and in the vicinity of Ribemont a detachment of French troops under Lord Bousies and Sir Jean Beuel, numbering one hundred and twenty men-at-arms, attacked a force of Sir Hugh Calverly's English troops, numbering eighty knights and squires, and killed and captured a number of them. A little later a detachment of the same force, which came to avenge the defeat of their comrades, was equally unfortunate.†

Without any notable military effort, the Duke of Lancaster traversed the fertile sections of Picardy, the Isle of France, and Champagne.

The policy adopted by Charles V. was to avoid a general engagement, to strengthen the garrisons of

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 677. † *Idem.*, p. 680.

his fortresses, and to divide his forces into smaller bodies under able leaders. By these means he pursued a campaign of annoying and harassing his enemy by unexpected attacks, and by cutting off his foraging parties and supplies. The rear of the English Army was closely followed and its flanks pressed by a force of above four hundred lances under Lord de Clisson, with Lord de Laval, the Vicomte de Rohan, and others; but no engagement of importance took place. One of the most notable of the minor actions, of which there were many, occurred on the 21st of September, near the little village of Ouchy, where Sir Jean de Vienne and Sir Jean Beuel, with one hundred and twenty lances, made a night attack upon the English camp. The part surprised was that under command of Sir Walter Huet. The attack occurred just before daybreak, and was so completely successful that the entire camp was thrown into great confusion; Sir Walter Huet was killed, with a number of his followers; and many were taken prisoners. The French retired without loss.*

At this time Charles V. summoned Lord de Clisson to come to Paris to take part in the council to which he had already called Du Guesclin and the Ducs d'Anjou, de Berri, and de Bourgogne. The important subject of this conference was the demand, which many of the most earnest and powerful of the leaders of the forces of the King of France had made, that a general battle should be had with the English.

When the council was opened, Charles V. laid

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 681.

before it the statements and demands of the nobles and barons, that a battle should be had between the two armies, that the progress of the English through the country was a reflection upon the courage and skill of the French leaders, and other similar complaints. He then called upon Du Guesclin, as most experienced in these matters, to express his opinion.

The Constable was very cautious. He said: "Sire, those who urge us to fight the English do not appreciate the peril of such a course. I do not say that they should not be fought, but it should be done with advantage to us, as they know well how to do for theirs, and as they have done many times at Crécy, at Poitiers, in Gascony, in Brittany, in France, in Picardy, and in Normandy. These victories have greatly injured your realm and the nobles who are in it. They are so conceited that they think of no nation except their own, on account of the great ransoms which they have secured, and by which they have become enriched. Here is my companion, the Lord de Clisson, who can speak on this point better than I, for he was brought up among them from his childhood, and knows better than any of us their manners and conditions. So I pray, dear Sire, if it be your pleasure, that he may aid me to conclude my speech."

Lord de Clissson was requested by the King, with much consideration, to express his opinion, and said: "If it please God, my lords, the English have been so fortunate that they think they cannot be defeated; and in battle they are the most confident people in the world, for the more blood they see, whether their own or their enemy's, the more eager

they are for the fray. They say that this success will not desert them while their King survives, so that, all things considered, my humble advice is that we do not meet them in battle unless they are taken at a disadvantage, as one should take his enemies in war. I consider the affairs of France in good condition, and what the English once held they have lost by careful warfare on our part. So, good Sire, you have had good counsel trust to it still." *

"By my faith! Lord de Clisson," replied the King, "I do not intend to go beyond it, nor do I desire to place my chivalry nor my kingdom in danger of loss; and I again charge you, together with my Constable, with the welfare of my realm, for your opinion seems wisely taken. And you? what say you, my brother of Anjou?"

"By my faith!" replied the Duc d'Anjou, "who ever advises you otherwise will not do so loyally. We should continue to war against the English as we have commenced; when they expect to find us in one part of the realm, we shall be in another, and we will always take, at our convenience, the little which they now hold. I hope to do so well by the aid of these brave companions, that in Aquitaine and upper Gascony they will hold little."

This cautious policy was in accordance with that which Charles V. most desired to follow. In terminating the conference, he assigned a force of five hundred lances only to the Constable and Lord de Clisson, with instructions to act mainly as a corps of observation, and to pursue their previous method

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., pp. 683, 684.

of warfare, and harass the English without risking a general battle. This force found the English operating in Champagne along the fertile country on both banks of the Marne, which they crossed at will by means of bridges which were constructed by a force of engineers which they took with them. This fertile country was levied upon for supplies, and pillaged by their troops as far as Troyes. At this city the Ducs de Bourbon and de Bourgogne had assembled a force of twelve hundred lances.

Du Guesclin had reached Troyes with his forces before the English. The English, turning past Troyes, marched to Sens.

Here Lord de Clisson had prepared a surprise for them. Placing two hundred men-at-arms a short distance from Sens, he ordered them to await the approach of the English. He further ordered them, that on their arrival they should fall back before them, and draw them on to the body of his forces, which he had placed in concealment on both sides of the road, about a league distant. The plan succeeded. The English attacked and pursued the first body, and were led by them onward until they came upon the main body of De Clisson's forces, which attacked them with great fury. A large number of the English were slain, fully six hundred, while almost as large a number were made prisoners.

While these events were taking place, Gregory XI. had attempted to negotiate a peace between the Kings of England and France; but, as neither was desirous of discontinuing the war, his efforts were fruitless.

The campaign of the summer had been without

material advantage to the English army of invasion. They had marched a long distance into the interior of a hostile country, where they were surrounded by an enemy, ever alert and active, and most skilful in his efforts to embarrass them.

They were now face to face with the inclement season. So incessant was the watchfulness of their enemy, that they were unable to obtain sufficient provisions, and were compelled to keep their forces closely together in order to prevent their capture and defeat in detail. Cold and a lack of provisions soon produced sickness and mortality among them, which cost them the lives of many of their knights and squires. More than half their horses died from hard service and scanty food.

Internal dissensions arose between their leaders, ending in an open rupture between the Duke of Lancaster and the Duc de Bretagne. The latter left the camp of the Duke of Lancaster with the mere handful of his followers which remained. Marching to Bergerac, he subsequently went to Bordeaux, where he passed the winter.

The Duke of Lancaster also succeeded in reaching Bordeaux with the shattered remnant of his army in the latter days of December.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONSTABLE REDEEMS AQUITAINE AND POITOU.

1374–1376.

Marriage of Du Guesclin with Jeanne de Laval—His campaign in Aquitaine and Poitou—Surrender of Moissac—Siege and surrender of Auberoche, of La Reole and Becherel—Siege of Quimperlé—Treaty of Bruges—Termination of the campaign.

THE campaign of invasion of 1373, which, without any advantage gained, had terminated so disastrously to the English and the Duc de Bretagne, was full of encouragement to the King of France and to the Constable. In the interval elapsing between its close and the active preparations for new operations, Du Guesclin married Jeanne de Laval, the daughter of Jean de Laval, Lord de Chatillon, and Isabeau de Tinteniac. She was consequently the granddaughter of Jean, Lord de Tinteniac, who was killed at Mauron, and Jeanne de Dol, Dame de Tinteniac. The contract of this marriage was signed at Rennes on Saturday, the 21st of January, 1374.*

* Du Guesclin left no children by either of his wives. Jeanne de Laval survived him some years. After his death, by dispensation of

It will be remembered that twenty years before this event Du Guesclin had achieved a brilliant deed of arms in the defeat and capture of Sir Hugh Calverly, in his attempt to surprise the Maréchal d'Audrehem while the guest of the Dame de Tinteniac at her castle of Montmuran; and that it was here, and on that occasion, that he was made a full chevalier for his gallantry.* The chapel in which he was invested with the white robe of the chevalier was, according to local tradition, the place of his marriage with Jeanne, the granddaughter and heiress of the Dame de Tinteniac.

Shortly after Du Guesclin's marriage occurred that of his cousin, Olivier de Mauny, who had been his intimate companion, and had shared in all of his important military experiences. He had sought the hand of the only daughter of the Lord de Roye of Picardy, who was then held as a prisoner by the English. At the same time Henry of Castile held as a prisoner Lord Guiscard d'Angle, whose freedom Edward III. was anxious to secure, as he was an English subject. Olivier de Mauny treated with Henry of Castile for his delivery to himself, together with his son William d'Angle, in exchange for the lands of Grète which Olivier de Mauny held in Castile. With these two prisoners he effected the exchange of Lord de Roye and his return to his possessions, after which he married his daughter.†

Pope Guy XII., she married Lord de Laval, her cousin. Jeanne de Laval was living in 1429, and in the first months of this year Jeanne d'Arc sent to her a small gold ring as an assurance of her veneration for one who bore the name of Du Guesclin.—*Procès de Jeanne d'Arc*, par J. Quicherat, t. v., p. 109.

* Luce, *Vie de Bert. du Guesclin*, p. 129.

† Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., pp. 684, 685.

The preparations for the campaign of 1374 were early commenced and early completed. Before the middle of April the Duc d'Anjou had gathered at Perigeux an army of ten thousand men-at-arms, fifteen hundred cross-bow men, and thirty thousand troops of other characters; in all, an army estimated at forty thousand men. With these troops it was his purpose to drive the remaining English from Aquitaine and from the frontiers of Gascony. This army was under command of Du Guesclin, with Lord de Clisson, and others of the lords of Brittany and Gascony.

Marching from Perigeux, they passed the abbey of St. Sever, which was unmolested, on the delivery of hostages by the abbot, and a promise to abide by any decision regarding his allegiance which might be decided upon by the temporal lords. From St. Sever the Constable proceeded to Lourdes, which he besieged. The garrison maintained a most obstinate defence for fifteen days, at the end of which time the town was carried by assault and pillaged, and a large number of the garrison were killed. From Lourdes he marched to Sault, another of the fortified towns of the Comte de Foix. At this time the Comte de Foix, who had maintained a wise neutrality heretofore between the English and French causes, now proposed that if further operations against his lands were suspended until the middle of August, he would declare himself the subject of either party which should prove himself the stronger before Moissac on that day. After consultation, this proposition was accepted by the Duc d'Anjou.

Through the intervention of Pope Gregory XI. a truce was arranged at this time by the Constable and the Duc d'Anjou with the Duke of Lancaster, to continue until the 1st day of September following. After this was concluded, the Duke of Lancaster crossed to England, leaving Sir Thomas Felton Governor of the province of Aquitaine in his absence.

The day appointed by the Comte de Foix for the trial of strength before Moissac arrived, and found the Duc d'Anjou with a strong and well-appointed army on the field. The English failed to appear in force. Sir Thomas Felton came under safe-conduct, and stated that the day was included in the truce. The French, however, held that nothing was mentioned of this in the articles of truce, and that it did not suspend the agreement. The Comte de Foix accordingly placed himself and his lands under the sovereignty of France; and the Duc d'Anjou entered and took possession of Moissac, after which he marched with his army to Toulouse. From here he pushed on toward Bordeaux with the intention of besieging Auberoche and La Reole, a strong castle held by the English. The town and castle were surrendered without resistance on September 7, 1374, on the arrival of the army, and the inhabitants took the oath of allegiance to the King of France.

The action of the citizens of La Reole was followed by the surrender of Langon, St. Maquaire, Cendon, St. Bazille, Mauleon, Sebillac, and more than forty walled towns and fortresses. Nothing withstood the French in this campaign, for a general

desire to come under the sovereignty of France seemed to exist.*

The continued agitation for peace by Gregory XI. may have had some influence upon Edward III. and Charles V.; but it is evident that the continued misfortunes of Edward, in his efforts to retain a hold upon any portion of France, had rendered him willing to listen to propositions for peace. His failing health still further lessened his desire and power to attempt new enterprises. The uninterrupted success of the Constable and the Duc d'Anjou in their campaign had led Charles V. to lessen the proportions of his army, and to call Du Guesclin and his other leaders to Paris for a council.

After a brief time spent in Paris, the Constable was ordered by Charles V. to collect a sufficient force, and join the army of the Maréchals Louis de Sancerre and Lord de Blainville before Becherel, which they had held in siege for more than a year, and whose garrison had agreed to surrender if the siege were not raised by a sufficient force before November 1st.

On the day appointed Du Guesclin was before the castle with an army of ten thousand lances. As no force of English appeared to oppose him and raise the siege, the fortress was surrendered upon demand. The garrison, on leaving Becherel, went under a safe-conduct to the stronghold of St. Sauveur in Normandy, which was well supplied with provisions, and capable of sustaining a long siege.

The Constable at once invested the place, and made extensive preparations for besieging it by

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., pp. 688, 690.

land and by sea. The siege was vigorously prosecuted, and its defence equally obstinately maintained.

Shortly after the institution of the siege, the Duc de Bretagne, who had gone to England to seek aid from Edward in raising the siege of Becherel, arrived upon the coast of Brittany with a force of two thousand English men-at-arms and four hundred bowmen, under command of the Earl of Cambridge. By stress of weather they had been detained and compelled to land at St. Mahé, too late to aid in raising the siege of Becherel. The Duc de Bretagne, in revenge for the former action of the citizens in closing their gates against him, attacked the castle, carried it by assault, and massacred the entire garrison.

Information of the landing of this expedition was brought to Du Guesclin, who immediately sent a force of four hundred chevaliers, under command of Lords de Clisson, de Rohan, de Beaumanoir, and de Laval, to watch their movements.

The Duc de Bretagne, after the capture of St. Mahé, immediately laid siege to the town of St. Brieux, which, with its castle, was very strongly fortified.

While pressing this siege with great activity, he learned of the condition of St. Sauveur and its offer of conditional surrender. While the Duc de Bretagne had been pushing the siege of St. Brieux, Lord de Clisson had learned that Sir John Devereaux after being driven out of Poitou, had fortified himself strongly in a position not far distant from Quimperlé, and had been exceedingly oppressive

upon the inhabitants of the surrounding country. Lord de Clisson, and the Breton lords with him, at once decided to attack and capture him, if possible. With this intention, they surrounded his castle, called the "New Fort," with the greater part of their forces, and by frequent attacks and close investment placed him in a condition which would lead to speedy surrender. This state of affairs was made known to the Duc de Bretagne, who, withdrawing immediately from the siege of St. Brieux, started in hot haste to the relief of Sir John Devereaux, in the hope of capturing the four distinguished Breton barons.

The usual sagacity and watchfulness of Lord de Clisson gave him information of the approach of the Duc de Bretagne and his forces, and he rapidly withdrew into the town of Quimperlé with his men-at-arms. The Duke of Brittany, disappointed in his hopes of capturing De Clisson and the other barons, laid siege to Quimperlé, and sought by frequent assaults to take it by storm; but its defence was most skilfully managed by the Breton barons, who succeeded in repelling every attack made by overwhelming forces of the Duc. Feeling unable to maintain the defence for a long time, they attempted to secure a conditional surrender. The Duc de Bretagne was desirous of capturing them unconditionally, but after considerable negotiation agreed to a truce of eight days, upon the promise by them of an unconditional surrender if not relieved in the meantime by a force sufficient to raise the siege.

On learning the critical condition of these import-

ant commanders, Charles V. decided to sign a treaty which the papal legates had been proposing, and instructed the Duc d'Anjou to conclude a truce immediately with the Duke of Lancaster, and urged the necessity for promptness. This was accomplished, and a truce was arranged at Bruges, extending from June 27, 1375, to June 30, 1376.*

A copy of this treaty was sent by special messengers to the Duke of Brittany, and reached him three days before the time appointed for the surrender. This was a great disappointment to him, for he had been confident of gaining possession of four of the most powerful of the Breton barons, who were among his most dangerous opponents.

So ended a campaign most barren in results of advantage to him who instigated it, and who was compelled by the treaty of Bruges to leave the province of Brittany, which he had kept so constantly in a disturbed condition. Taking with him his Duchesse, he crossed into England. By the same treaty of Bruges, which raised the siege of Quimperlé and terminated active military operations in Brittany, the town of St. Sauveur was surrendered to Du Guesclin.

During the remainder of the summer, little of event occurred. On the first days of November, the commissioners representing France and England met at Bruges to consider matters connected with the permanent establishment of peace. Little resulted from a protracted series of interviews. Edward III. stipulated that all the recent conquests of the French in the sections claimed by him

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 699 *et seq.*

should be returned to him; that the Captal de Buch should be liberated, besides other concessions; while Charles V. demanded that that part of the ransom of his father which had been paid to the King of England should be returned, and that the fortress and defences of Calais should be razed. These, and other requirements on the part of each of the sovereigns, presented matters of great difficulty of adjustment, and consequently nothing was accomplished beyond the extension of the truce from the 30th of June, 1376, to April 1, 1377.

This latter decision threw out of employment a large number of soldiers of fortune who had formerly belonged to the Free Companies. These returned to their predatory habits, and disturbed in some measure the quiet of several sections of France. The efforts of Charles V. to move them out of his kingdom, during that year, were not permanently successful.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONTINUED SUCCESS AGAINST THE ENGLISH.

1376–1379.

Death of the Black Prince—His character—Plans of Charles V.—Death of Edward III.—His character—The coronation of Richard II.—Charles V. invades England—Du Guesclin's operations in Normandy—The battle of Aymet—Defeat of the English—Siege of Bergerac; of Darras; of Mortaigne—Further operations against Charles the Bad—Death of Evan of Wales—The English invade Brittany—They besiege St. Malo—Failure of the expedition—Du Guesclin besieges Cherbourg—Operations against Charles the Bad.

IN a few weeks after the treaty of Bruges, in March, 1376, an event occurred which was of much importance to the cause of England. The Black Prince, whose health had been steadily declining, died on the 8th of June, 1376, at Westminster. It was a premature ending, at the age of forty-six, of a life which had displayed much strength of character and many attractive traits.

Pleasing in his personal appearance, and with the graces of one educated amid the refining influences of an elegant Court, his natural urbanity and courtesy of manner were conspicuously developed. Possessing but few of the vices and a large share of

the virtues of the period, fond of athletic and martial exercises, filled with a sentiment of honour, in sympathy with the most elevated spirit of the chivalry of the time, he naturally drew to himself a brilliant environment, and won universal esteem. Although persistent in his opinions and purposes, he was ever ready to listen to the advice of those whom he had chosen as his counsellors, and whom he selected wisely.

A romantic atmosphere has been thrown about his name by the chroniclers of his time, and Froissart, who held him in great admiration, places him among the highest exemplars of chivalry.

A careful comparison of the historic narratives of the century and of the events of the drama in which he played so prominent a part, while it detracts nothing from the actual brilliancy of his character and renown, brings him into strong comparison with others, whose names have been less linked with the romantic, but whose careers have been none the less remarkable. Time and distance from the actual occurrences of historic narrative tend to prune away the personal prejudices shown by the earlier narrators, and place in a truer light the actual characteristics of individuals, as well as the logic of events. An estimate of the career of the Black Prince forms no exception to this conclusion. Commencing his military experiences on the field of battle at Crécy at the early age of sixteen, he was then and continuously afterward under the counsel and guidance of Sir John Chandos, one of the bravest knights and most judicious and expert military leaders of the time.

At Poitiers, ten years subsequent to Crécy, and where the Black Prince won lasting renown, the movements of the English Army were directed and controlled by Sir John Chandos, who was associated with the Black Prince during every movement of that eventful battle, and without whose advice no movement was made.* It should be remembered that to the same able general must be accredited the success of the battle of Navarrete, ten years later, where the Duke of Lancaster was guided and aided to success by him as the Black Prince had been at Crécy and at Poitiers. These conclusions can be drawn without in any measure detracting from the justly accorded fame and glory of the Black Prince.

His death was a source of universal sadness and regret throughout England, where he was generally esteemed and beloved. The treaty of Bruges, which suspended military operations until June 30, 1377, by no means suspended negotiations for a permanent peace. The English were in a condition which rendered active military operations a matter of most serious consideration. Driven from almost every point which they had held in France, defeated disastrously in two extensive and important campaigns with the Duc de Bretagne, their only ally of importance in France being at that time a fugitive from his province, their prospects of regaining lost prestige by continuance of the war in France were far from bright. Added to these were the loss of an able and esteemed leader by the death of the Black Prince, and also the prospect of the early decease of Edward III., and consequent complications at

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 346 *et seq.*

home. These conditions made present peace all the more to be desired.

On the other hand, Charles V., by his policy of conducting his affairs in accordance with the advice of wise and skilful counsellors and leaders, had succeeded in quieting the disturbances of his kingdom, bringing his people together in a spirit of national unity, and had driven the English almost entirely from his domains.

For the existence of these conditions he was indebted to nothing so much as to the sagacity, skill, and unfaltering patriotism of Du Guesclin. He was not slow to recognise these facts, and accordingly endeavoured to show his appreciation of them by a distinguished recognition of the Constable. To him he granted the Vicounty of Pontorson, as a partial return for the great service rendered.

Meanwhile peace negotiations were in progress between the two kingdoms. Charles V., however, was not idle. Cautious by nature, he knew well how to take advantage of favourable circumstances. He concluded that the affairs of England were such that he might venture to depart from his usual custom of remaining on the defensive, and assume the offensive for a time. He was no doubt influenced, in this decision, by his confidence in Du Guesclin and the other leaders of his forces, who had steadily gained success after success for his arms.

Feeling that the condition to which the prospective death of Edward III. would give rise in England would be favourable to his plans, he quietly prepared, during the winter of 1376 and the spring of 1377, to invade England at the close of the truce of

Bruges. Just previously to the expiration of this armistice, Edward III. passed away, on the 21st of June, 1377, in his sixty-fifth year, leaving his grandson, Richard, the son of the Black Prince, to succeed him. For this event he had prepared in the year previous to his death. In these provisions he ordained that Richard should succeed to all the titles of his father, the Black Prince, and have the power to call Parliament together.

The reign of Edward III. had been an unusually long one, covering a period of fifty-one years, during which he had gained the affection and esteem of his people. He was a man of pleasing presence and manner, and was thoroughly imbued with a desire for the good of his people. While his policy in the domestic affairs of his kingdom was wise and salutary, it stands in marked contrast with his foreign policy. His ambitions in France and his persistent hostility to her, with his unwise efforts to maintain his assumption of sovereignty over her, led to protracted and bloody wars, which continued during the greater part of his reign. The disaster and loss in which these resulted stand in marked contrast to the success and fortune of his policy at home. The latter half of his reign obscured with darkest shadows the brightness which marked its earlier portion.

His grandson, not yet eleven years of age, was crowned King as Richard II., at Westminster, on the 11th of July, 1377. The preparations which Charles V. had made for the invasion of England were completed before the close of the truce; and at its expiration a fleet, commanded by the French

admiral Sir John de Vienne, sailed for the English coast, which was reached early in July. The town of Rye, in Kent, was taken and burned, after having been pillaged. From thence the fleet sailed to Yarmouth, on the Isle of Wight, which was taken and plundered. The same fate fell upon the towns of Dartmouth, Lewes, Winchelsea, and Plymouth, on the mainland, in which a large amount of plunder and many important prisoners were captured. From this point the fleet sailed to Dover, but, finding a large force gathered to meet it, recrossed the Channel to Calais, from which place it soon sailed to Harfleur.*

At the time when the fleet had set out from France, an expedition under the Duc de Bretagne had been sent against Calais, which was one of the few places in France still held by the English.

The fortifications were such, that, without co-operation by sea, he was unable to take it. He accordingly attacked and captured the castles near it, which were still held by the English, and garrisoned them with his own troops.

While these naval operations against the coast of England, and in the north of France against English possessions, were in progress, Du Guesclin and the Duc d'Anjou were busily occupied with a strong force in reducing the few castles and fortresses still held by the English in Aquitaine.

Laying siege to Bergerac, on the river Dordogne, the Constable prepared to capture it. Its extensive fortifications rendered the task a difficult one. Du Guesclin accordingly sent a picked force of three

* Froissart, Liv. I., Part II., p. 712.

hundred lances under Sir Pierre de Beuel to La Reole to bring up a large engine, capable of hurling stones of two hundred pound's weight.*

Sir Thomas Felton, the commandant at Bordeaux, having heard of the expedition of Du Guesclin and the Duc d'Anjou against Bergerac, had taken a force of over three hundred lances to watch them and to do such injury as he could, though unable to cope with the forces of the Constable in a general battle. Having taken a position not far from La Reole, he learned of the despatch of the detachment to bring up the engine. Hoping to capture it, he moved to a position from which he might attack the escort *en route*. Du Guesclin, learning through his scouts of this movement, sent an additional force of three hundred lances, under command of Sir Pierre de Morny and Evan of Wales, to re-enforce his first detachment, which it joined near Aymet. At this point they were attacked by Sir Thomas Felton, and a severe engagement resulted. After an obstinate resistance, the English were defeated. A large number of their men-at-arms were slain, and many were taken prisoners, among whom were Sir Thomas Felton, four of the Gascon barons, and others among their leaders. The French reached Bergerac, with the engine and their prisoners, on the following day.

The defeat and capture of Sir Thomas Felton and his forces so disheartened the garrison, that seeing the extensive preparations for reducing the fortress, and becoming hopeless of defending it, they surrendered the town and castle to the Constable.†

* Cuvelhier, Part II., v. 22583 *et seq.* † *Idem.*, v. 22586.

The four Gascon barons who had been captured took the oath of allegiance to the King of France, and were set free without ransom. Two of these, Lords de Duras and de Roseen, soon after left the French forces, and rejoined the English at Bordeaux. This act greatly irritated the Duc d'Anjou, who determined to punish their treachery later.

Following the surrender of Bergerac, a large number of towns and fortresses held by the English surrendered to the forces of France, few making any formal resistance. Among these were Chatillon, Sauveterre, St. Bazille, Montsegur, and St. Macaire. The number surrendered is variously estimated at between two hundred and fifty and three hundred.

Following the submission of St. Macaire, the Constable moved against Darras, a strong and well-garrisoned fortress. An immediate attempt was made to carry it by assault, which was so vigorously met by the besieged that it proved unsuccessful.*

On the evening of that day Sir Alain de Houssoie and Sir Alain de St. Pol arrived with a large force of Bretons, who had just taken by storm the Castle of Cadilhac, belonging to the English.

On the following morning the Duc d'Anjou directed the renewal of the assault with increased preparations. He caused it to be announced by his heralds that "the first to enter Darras should receive five hundred francs." This was a stimulus to exertion for many of those who were without means, and who followed war as a profession.

The ladders were quickly raised against the walls,

* Froissart, Liv. II., p. 9.

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* Froissart, Liv. II., p. 9.

and the young knights and squires vied with each other in their acts of daring and bravery.

The first to mount upon one of these ladders was Lord Langurant, one of the Gascon barons who had been made prisoner with Sir Thomas Felton, and who had been set free without ransom. He made an effort to show that he was not like his two associates, who had broken their parole and returned to the English. He rapidly made his way to the parapet, and fought hand-to-hand with the defenders. So violently was he assailed, that his bacinet was torn from his head, and he would have been slain had not one of his squires, who followed him, protected him with a shield while he descended the ladder.

In another section the second Gascon chevalier, Lord de Roye, mounted a ladder with Sir Percieval d'Aineval, and attempted most valiantly to gain the wall. In other directions similar attempts were made by distinguished knights upon the scaling ladders.

The first to mount the wall and enter the town were Lord de Roye and Sir Jean de Rosoy. In several other quarters successful lodgments upon the walls were made by the assailants; and the garrison, seeing that further resistance was hopeless, surrendered, but the castle still held out against the besiegers.

On the morrow the Constable, taking the Maréchal de Sancerre with him, made a reconnoissance and examination of the walls and means of defence. These he found to be formidable, and accordingly so reported to the Duc d'Anjou, who replied: "There is no need of considering this; I have said

and sworn that I will never leave here, of my own free will, until the castle is taken." The Constable replied, "Then we will do it!" Preparations for an active siege were immediately begun. The large war engines were moved near the walls, and other formidable dispositions were commenced. These so impressed the garrison with the uselessness of further resistance, that they offered to surrender, on condition that they were allowed to leave the place with what they could carry. This was accepted; and on the third day they retired, and the castle was occupied by a garrison of the troops of the Constable.*

After the capture of the town and Castle of Duras, the Duc d'Anjou left one hundred lances at Landuras, under command of Lord de Roye and Sir Jean de Rosoy, to hold the frontier against the Bordelais. Granting the main part of his forces leave of absence for a time, he went to Toulouse with the Constable and others, with five hundred lances, to see his wife and his recently born son.

Before going, he directed Evan of Wales to take a strong force of Bretons, Poitevins, and Angevins, and advance into Poitou, in order to lay siege to Mortaigne, a strong fortress held by the Souldich † de l'Estrade.

* Froissart, Liv. II., p. 10.

† "Souldich," in Latin *soldichus*, was a name of distinction among the Bordelaise. Du Cange claims that this word is derived from *syndichus*. By some authors the souldich was given rank with the counts, viscounts, and barons. The souldichs were probably, originally, the defenders of the castles and chateaux; and the office became hereditary in certain families, in the same manner as the title of count, viscount, etc.—*Buchon.*

After a grand fête, with a tournament and other ceremonies, given by the Duc d'Anjou for the Constable and assembled barons, in honour of the birth of his son, they left Toulouse. The Constable and Lord de Coucy returned to France; and the Maréchal de Sancerre went into Auvergne to aid the Comte Dauphin and the barons of Auvergne against the English, who were in Limousin and the frontiers of Auvergne.

Evan of Wales, after resting his troops for a short time in Saintonge, proceeded to Mortaigne, and made preparations for the siege. With him were many able leaders, among whom were the Lords de Pons and de Vivonne, and other chevaliers of Poitou. With Du Guesclin's Bretons were Sir Alain de St. Pol, Sir Alain de la Houssoie, Sir Guillaume Montcontour, and many others.

The strength of the fortress demanded careful preparations, which were duly made, and forces were so disposed that no supplies could reach it by land or by water. The intention of Evan of Wales was to reduce the stronghold by the slower process of famine, as the defences were too extensive to be carried by assault.

Having driven the English almost entirely from France, Charles V. determined to remove, if possible, one of their means of entry by possessing himself of the ports of Normandy, held by Charles the Bad, who was ever intriguing against him, and whom he now openly declared his enemy. His constant efforts with the English to injure France led Charles V. to determine to drive him from the kingdom. In the prosecution of this plan the

dislike and distrust of his own people aided him greatly.

The sudden death of the Queen of Navarre, the sister of the King of France, which gave rise to a suspicion of poisoning by Charles the Bad, led the King of France to break all relations with him. The belief that the plot included himself still further increased the hostility of Charles V.

The deaths of several other important personages about this time were attributed to his agency; and information obtained from several reliable sources implicated De Rue, chamberlain of Charles the Bad, and led to his arrest by the King of France, and to his trial by a high commission, over which the Chancellor of France presided.

Secousse * states that De Rue voluntarily testified that the charges of intention to poison the King of France were true. and gave the details of the plot, which, he stated, had been confided to him by Charles of Navarre. This, with other information of similar character, led Charles V. to initiate measures for his expulsion from France.

The first of these was to gain to his own support the son of Charles of Navarre. This he did by inviting him to come to Paris. He came readily, and was accompanied by a number of the Norman leaders. Charles V. informed him of the crimes of his father, and his attempts against his own life. The young man, being but sixteen years of age, was greatly impressed with the recital, and consented to aid the King of France in gaining possession of the strongholds which he desired in Normandy. This

* *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, Part II., p. 156 *et seq.*

the young Charles was constrained to do in order to show his lack of complicity in the evil schemes of his father.

A second measure of which Charles V. decided to avail himself was the raising of a strong force to be placed under the command of the Constable du Guesclin, with which he should drive the adherents of Charles of Navarre from France, as he had done the English. Under the Duc de Bourgogne and Du Guesclin, this force was raised, and held in readiness to march promptly into Normandy at such time as Charles V. might designate. The force was no sooner prepared to move than orders were given for the invasion of Normandy; and it accordingly marched against the town of Bernay, which was taken. Among the prisoners was Du Tertre, the secretary of Charles of Navarre. This was an important capture for the King of France. He was sent to Paris, where Charles V. had him brought before a commission similar to that which passed upon the case of De Rue. Before this commission Du Tertre testified to the details of many measures which had been intrusted to him by Charles of Navarre.

Both De Rue and Du Tertre were condemned by the Parliament of Paris on the 16th of June, 1378, and the sentence of decapitation passed upon them. This sentence was executed five days later.*

Du Guesclin and the Duc de Bourgogne pushed their operations in Normandy with activity. In the Castle of Breteuil, which was among their early captures, Pierre and Bonne de Navarre, the son and

* Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, Part. II., p. 190.

daughter of Charles of Navarre, were made prisoners.

But little serious opposition was made to the progress and operations of the Constable, and a number of important towns were taken, among which were Evreux, Avranches, Mortaigne, Pacy, and other equally strong places. In the Castle of Gavrey was captured a large amount of treasure, among which were the crown jewels of the King of Navarre.

Operations during three months, ending July 1st, were pressed with such vigour and success, that at the end of this time the fortress of Cherbourg only remained to the King of Navarre in Normandy: all else had been taken by the Constable and the Duc de Bourgogne. In the meantime the Duc d'Anjou, under the direction of Charles V., had invaded the possessions of Charles of Navarre in Languedoc. The city of Montpelier was captured with little resistance, and control of this section was secured.

The assassination of Evan of Wales during these events took from the service of Charles V. an important and valuable commander. He was at the time of his death engaged in the siege of Mortaigne, which had been reduced nearly to the point of surrender. He was fatally stabbed by one of his attendants, a spy named Lamb, whom he had recently taken into his employ.* The assassin took refuge in the fortress of Mortaigne.

The complete failure of the English to maintain themselves in their possessions in France, led them to plan an expedition to regain what they had lost, both in possessions and in prestige.

* Froissart, Liv. II., p. 31.

Soon after the young king, Richard II., was established upon his throne as the successor of Edward III., preparations for an extensive expedition, both naval and land, were begun. This expedition, under the Dukes of Lancaster and Cambridge, with other notable leaders, sailed from England for the coast of Normandy, but landed at St. Malo in Brittany, which town they at once besieged. The garrison was strengthened by the Vicomte de Rohan and other able Breton leaders.*

Charles V., well aware of the movements of the English, sent a strong force of over ten thousand chevaliers and men-at-arms, under the Maréchals de Sancerre and de Blainville, with other able leaders, to aid the garrison and to raise the siege.

Each army took up a strong position, and each waited for the other to make the attack. No decisive action having occurred, and being unable to take the town by assault, the English resorted to mining the walls. The Governor of St. Malo, an able chevalier named Mourface, detected the position of their mine. Taking a chosen body of men-at-arms, he left the town at night with great secrecy, and entered the English lines at the point where the miners were at work. Finding the sentinels asleep, he destroyed the mine, and, in returning to the town, attacked and killed many of the sentries of the English forces.†

The approach of winter and the failure of the expedition compelled the English to raise the siege of St. Malo, and return to their own country, having accomplished nothing as the result of this extensive effort.

* Froissart, Liv. II., p. 33. † Idem, pp. 39, 40.

Considering the active operations of the campaign closed by the withdrawal of the English and the approach of winter, Du Guesclin disbanded his army, retaining about three hundred lances only, with which he instituted the siege of Cherbourg. The strength of this fortress was such, that he concluded that it could only be reduced by a complete investment by land and sea. While inspecting its fortifications, Sir Olivier du Guesclin, the brother of the Constable, was captured by a force of English, who sallied out of the town for the purpose.

Charles V., by a successful campaign, had secured all the possessions of Charles the Bad in Normandy, except Cherbourg: this he was unable to take, except by the slow process of a siege. He therefore decided to carry his operations against him into Navarre, and with this purpose induced Henry of Castile to send an army into Navarre to attack him in his possessions there. This Henry finally concluded to do, and sent an army under his son John, who besieged Pampeluna. As soon as tidings of this movement reached Lord Neufville at Bordeaux, he sent a force of five hundred men-at-arms and one thousand archers, under Sir Thomas Trivet, to the aid of Charles the Bad.

The forces of Castile, not desiring to meet the army of Charles the Bad thus re-enforced, raised the siege of Pampeluna, and retired into Castile.*

* Froissart, Liv. II., p. 45.

CHAPTER XV.

FRANCE FREED FROM ENGLISH OCCUPATION.

1379–1380.

Efforts of Charles V. to possess Brittany—A parliament of the Peers summoned—The Bretons maintain their rights—Du Guesclin's loyalty questioned—His indignation—He resigns the sword of Constable—Regret of Charles V.—Du Guesclin leads a force into Languedoc—He besieges Chateauneuf de Randon—His death—His character.

THE continuous successes of Du Guesclin in taking the possessions of the English, and in driving them from nearly every part of France, led Charles V. to feel that he had reached a point where he could lay claim to the duchy of Brittany, and annex it to France. His hatred of the Duc de Bretagne, and the facility with which the English found entry into France through his aid, led him to desire to acquire the control of all of the Breton ports.

An attempt to further these plans by creating disturbances in Scotland by means of envoys sent thither failed. He accordingly decided to call an assembly of the Peers, and to lay his project before them. This he was led to do by the confidence

which he had gained through the success of his great captains, and also from his belief that a strong and universal sentiment in favour of annexation to France existed in Brittany. On the 4th of September, 1378, the Parliament assembled at Paris. Charles laid before it his project of the annexation of Brittany.

He urged that Sir Jean de Montfort had been hostile to the kingdom of France, and had done it and its people much injury, and, in having made war upon the King of France, had been guilty of deeds for which he should be deprived of his possessions; and that these should be annexed to the Crown of France.

On considering this statement, the Parliament decided to summon the Duc de Bretagne to appear before it on the 9th of December, and answer to these charges. This decree was published in the leading cities of Brittany.

The day appointed having arrived, the Parliament was convened, but the Duke of Brittany failed to appear. After waiting six days, a decree was passed confiscating his possessions to the Crown. Charles V. appointed the Duc de Bourbon, the Maréchal de Sancerre, and Sir Jean de Vienne, with others, to go into Brittany, and assume possession of the duchy in the name of the King of France.

Upon the issuance of this decree, the Duc de Bretagne sent representatives, who maintained that the decree was illegal because he had been summoned but a single time, while legally three separate summons should have been issued; that the summons was not made in his place of residence; and, further,

that no provision for his safety had been provided, even if he had made the attempt to come.

The Comtesse de Penthièvre, the widow of Charles de Blois, claimed through her representatives that the decree was illegal; and that, even if it were legal, the duchy could not be confiscated with prejudice to the claims of her children, who, by the provisions of the treaty of Guérande, were made heirs of John de Montfort, in the event of his death without male issue.

The King of France listened to none of these objections, nor did he give sufficient consideration to the general opposition of the Bretons themselves to the course which he seemed determined to follow. Though the Bretons detested the Duc de Bretagne, he was still their sovereign, as they considered him, and they were unwilling to permit the confiscation of his possessions.

In order to overcome this opposition to his plans, and to change the current of Breton opinion, Charles V. sent for Du Guesclin, the Lords de Clisson and de Laval, and the Vicomte de Rohan, and considered the matter with them. Du Guesclin and Lord de Clisson, who were hostile to the Duc de Bretagne, were ready to aid Charles in his endeavour to overcome Breton discontent. Lord de Laval declined to yield consent, and declared that he would hold his fortresses himself, and take no part in depriving the Duc de Bretagne of his rights. The Vicomte de Rohan took a politic course, though really opposed to the plans of Charles V.

Wholly underrating the strength of the Breton resistance, and bent upon carrying out his plans,

Charles V. persisted in opposing the general sentiment of the inhabitants of the province. Many of the most powerful barons had entered into a confederation to resist his effort at confiscation. In order to suppress these expressions of popular discontent, he directed the Duc de Bourbon to invade Brittany through Anjou, and with a strong force to take possession of the province.

The members of the confederation not only formed a league, but invited the burghers of the principal cities to join them in resisting the enforcement of the decree.

The Duc de Bourbon, in accordance with his instructions, moved forward to occupy Nantes; but, when he had proceeded as far as Chateauceaux, he was met by Lord de Clisson, who had left Nantes with the intelligence that the entire province of Brittany was in arms to resist the attempt.

The Duc de Bourbon immediately returned to Paris to consult with the King. Meanwhile the Breton forces attacked and captured several fortresses, and committed other hostile acts in the province of Anjou.

In addition to these demonstrations they sent messengers to the Duc de Bretagne, requesting him to return to his duchy. Obtaining important assistance from Richard II. of England through a treaty signed July 13, 1379, a strong force of English troops was sent to his aid. With this army he sailed from Southampton on the 3d of August, and landed upon the shores of Brittany at St. Malo.

An assembly was held at Dinan, where he was warmly received by the people. All of the Breton

lords, except Du Guesclin and De Clisson, had been invited to be present. Accepting the proffered support of the Breton lords, he at once began his preparations to raise an army, in order to take the field against the Ducs d'Anjou and de Bourbon, and Du Guesclin.

These conditions left Du Guesclin in a position of extreme embarrassment. A Breton by birth, and with loyalty to his province, he was placed in apparent hostility to it by his unwavering loyalty to the kingdom of France. His patriotism led him to look beyond the limits of his native province, and to seek the welfare of France as a whole. The Breton lords clung to a narrower allegiance, and he was with sorrow compelled to see his most able associates in arms assume the cause of the Duc de Bretagne against the King of France. He had ever felt that Charles de Blois was the rightful successor to the dukedom of Brittany. With patriotic devotion to France, he felt strong repugnance against the service of one whom he considered a usurper. He was therefore compelled to remain loyal to the service of France. It was a painful position for Du Guesclin, as he felt that in the event of civil war, which he was persuaded would follow, he would lose the support and aid of many of his most trusted and able associates in arms. Lord de Clisson also declined to join the other Breton barons, and remained loyal to the cause of France.

Charles V., blinded by his determination to secure the annexation of Brittany at all hazards, and listening only to advice which consorted with his own wishes, declined to entertain any negotia-

tions for the settlement of the matter without resort to arms.

In this excited state of public feeling, Charles V. was tempted to listen to the insinuations of jealous and unprincipled adherents against the sincerity of the Constable.

The family of Lord de Laval was strongly opposed to his scheme of annexation, and was in favour of Breton autonomy. Du Guesclin's alliance by marriage with this family gave some colour of plausibility to the insinuations of designing enemies.

As soon as the Constable learned these facts, he immediately returned his sword of office to the King of France, and prepared to leave the country and go to Spain. Wounded to the quick by this imputation upon his honour, and feeling that for France and her sovereign he had been willing to sink out of sight all personal feelings and preferences, he could not do otherwise than assume that the action of Charles V. had shown a lack of appreciation of the sacrifices which he had made for him and for his patriotic love for France.

Charles V., realising in some degree the extent of his injustice, immediately sent the Ducs d'Anjou and de Bourbon to him, urging him to retain the sword, and expressing the deepest regret that he had allowed himself to listen to any imputation upon the loyalty of one who had so signally and devotedly served him.

The Constable replied with firmness and dignity, and with great respect, but declined to receive the sword, declaring that " he preferred his honour to

any benefits which the King could bestow." The messengers sorrowfully left Pontorson, and returned to Paris.

Du Guesclin was fixed in his determination not to enter the service of the Duc de Bretagne, and made plans to go to Spain. Charles V. had at this time received complaints from the people of Languedoc against the Duc d'Anjou, who had pursued a harsh and oppressive course as governor of that province.

The petition sent to Charles prayed for the removal of the Duc d'Anjou, and urged that Du Guesclin should be sent in his stead. This afforded Charles an opportunity to assign to him duties in a part of the kingdom distant from Brittany. The disturbances by the Free Companies in the south of France was an additional reason for the King's desire to send him into that section.

Du Guesclin accepted the commission, and took command of a strong force of men-at-arms, and prepared to enter upon the campaign. Before setting out, he urged Charles to settle the affair of Brittany peacefully.

Early in May, 1380, he started with his army for the province of Languedoc. His first important movement after his arrival was to besiege the stronghold of Chateauneuf de Randon,—a fortress held by the English, and well prepared to sustain a siege. Pressing the siege with his usual vigour, Du Guesclin met an obstinate defence; but the garrison, becoming convinced that his efforts would prove successful, entered into negotiations by which they agreed to surrender the fortress, if not relieved by the King of England upon a certain day.

During this interval Du Guesclin was taken severely ill. It was a sickness induced by his great exertions in the assaults, in which he had taken an active part, in the heat of the season. Realising that his hours were numbered, he made his will, received the sacraments of his religion, generously rewarded his attendants, and charged the Maréchal de Sancerre to beg the King to continue his protection over his wife, Jeanne de Laval, and Olivier du Guesclin, his brother. He directed that his heart be buried in the church of the Dominicans at Dinan.

These affairs completed, he addressed his old leaders, who in tears surrounded his couch, and said to them: "My dear companions, you see my condition, and that death, which has overtaken me, has prevented me from doing all that I would wish to do for you, but let that not discourage you. If I cannot speak to your King in your favour, your services will speak for you. Continue to serve him faithfully. He is just and generous, and will recompense you according to your deserts. Before I die, I wish to repeat one precept that I have urged upon you a thousand times before: remember that wherever you make war, the people of the Church, the poor people, the women and children, are not your enemies, and that you only bear arms to defend and protect them. I have always urged this upon you, and I now repeat it for the last time, in bidding you adieu, and recommending myself to your kindly thoughts."

Calling for his sword of office, he took it in his hands and looked upon it for a moment. Undoubt-

edly recalling the glories and triumphs which it had won, he kissed its cross-shaped hilt, and, placing it in the hands of Louis de Sancerre, said to him, "Receive this from my hand; and I pray you, in returning it to the King, to express, to him my acknowledgment of his favours, and my regret in any failures that I may have made in his service. If such there be, they have been through inadvertence, and never knowingly. If God had granted me the time to do so, I had hoped to free this kingdom from its English enemies; but the King has faithful leaders who remain, and who will do so. Assure him that in death I remain his faithful subject, though the most humble of all. Adieu! Monsieur le Maréchal, I can do no more! I can do no more!" With these words his head fell upon the breast of the Maréchal. For a moment he raised his head once more, and, casting a longing look upon his old comrades in arms who surrounded him, he closed his eyes and breathed his last.

So ended, in its sixty-first year, the life of a remarkable man and soldier. It was noon when the sad news was heralded through the camp. The soldiers and their commanders wept. All felt that a father had been taken from them, and were overwhelmed with grief in the recollection of his untiring kindness toward and interest in them all.

Meanwhile the truce accorded to the English had expired upon this day. No one had appeared to succour them. They had agreed to surrender to him only. Would they now do so?

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Maréchal de Sancerre presented himself before the barriers at the

edge of the moat, and announced to the commandant of the fortress the death of Du Guesclin. De Roos, a high-minded and able soldier, who commanded the garrison, replied: "I did not promise to surrender this fortress to any save to the Constable Du Guesclin; to him I gave my word, and I will keep it. I desire to do this in no ordinary way, but in a manner to express the great honour and esteem in which I have ever held him, and in which I shall ever hold his memory. I should be ashamed to open these gates to any other than to him; it is right that I should render to him, though dead, what I owe to him only. I will lay upon his bier the keys of a place which is justly his."

That evening as the sun was setting, the French Army was drawn up in line of battle, with banners displayed. The English, with De Roos at their head, emerged from the open gates of the fortress, and marched to the tent of Du Guesclin, where they were received by the Maréchal de Sancerre.* Gathered about the body of the dead Constable were the heralds and leaders of the Army. At the foot of the couch, upon a mantle of velvet embroidered with golden *fleurs de lis*, was laid his sword. At sight of this, the commandant, bowing low, said, "It is to you, Sir Constable, that I surrender my fortress; you alone have been able to compel me to yield it to the French, even though I had sworn to hold it for the King of England with the last drop of my blood." Having uttered these words, he laid the keys of the town at the feet of

* The monk of St. Denis records the death of Louis de Sancerre as occurring in 1402.—Sainte Palaye.

the dead Constable, and, after kneeling for a few moments, arose and withdrew, with tears streaming from his eyes.

Such, on the 13th of July, 1380, were the closing scenes of the life of one of the most remarkable characters of history. Most of the chroniclers of the time do him full justice. Laying aside the colouring which a romantic period throws about him, and making all allowances for the enthusiasm of contemporaneous writers, we have still remaining a character as stalwart and sturdy in the strength of its mental traits as was his frame in its physique. In forming a just estimate of him, we must never lose sight of the circumstances and conditions in which he lived. It was a time when the will and might of the strongest was the law. The spirit of chivalry was then at its height, and had reached its fullest development; and, though there was much over which the veil of charity must be thrown, the best traits and characteristics of the time were found among its leaders.

To some Du Guesclin appears only as a brave and loyal chevalier, defeating his adversaries in tournaments and in battle, and fighting to the last in reverses. He was far more than this. From his early youth he displayed the characteristics of a leader of men. Possessing unusual bodily vigour and strength; with a power of endurance rarely equalled by many, he was able to sustain those mental traits whose energies ensured his success. Discernment and judgment were his distinctive virtues. As far removed from rashness as from timidity, he undertook no enterprise without careful

consideration; but, his opinion once formed, he followed it with action prompt, persistent, and decisive. These are the traits of a great soldier. The battles of Auray and Navarrete, in which he was defeated, were fought against his advice, and contrary to his judgment. He not only possessed unusual personal prowess, but he appreciated the art of managing bodies of men in the field. Nearly all of the battles of that day were decided by the personal courage and skill at arms of the combatants. He exhibited, beyond any soldier of his time, the genius of a general in selecting his positions, and in taking every advantage offered by the ground and the changing circumstances of the conflict. His ability in employing troops in strategic movements enabled him to cope with a force much larger than his own, where his lack of numbers was more than compensated for by the skill with which the movements of his troops were planned and directed.

With a high sense of personal honour he combined a generous liberality, and took no satisfaction in humbling a brave opponent. His patriotism was conspicuous and unflagging. Entering the service of the King of France early in his career, the whole effort of his life was in behalf of France. No temptation of position or pecuniary reward could swerve him from this steady devotion. By his loyalty and military genius, France was freed from English occupation and conquests. By his efforts the disturbances and distractions caused by the lawless followers of the Free Companies were quieted.

While his military life may not present that perfect harmony of traits which we find so prominent

in a Turenne, we must remember that this apparent lack of harmony was not so much in the man as in the time in which he lived.

The death of Du Guesclin was an event of national importance. By it Charles V. lost the strongest support to his throne, France her greatest citizen, and the people their sturdy defender and their idol. His wish was that his body might be interred in the chapel of the Dominicans at Dinan; but Charles, desirous of showing in the fullest manner his affection and esteem for his great captain, caused his remains to be brought to St. Denis, and buried at the foot of his own tomb.

The burial service took place in the royal Abbey with great pomp. The Ducs d'Anjou, de Berri, de Bourbon, and de Bourgogne were present with all the great nobles of the realm. The funeral oration having been pronounced, the body was lowered into the vault; and before his tomb was placed a lamp, which was to burn perpetually.

Reclining upon his tomb is a marble figure of the soldier in armour. His head is uncovered, his hands are folded across his breast, his feet rest upon the body of a lion, and his sword and shield lie by his side. The marble bears this simple epitaph:

"Ci git, noble homme, Messire Bertrand du Guesclin, Compte de Longueville, Connétable de France, lequel trépassa devant Castelneuf de Randon en Gévaudan, le treizieme jour de Julliet MCCCLXXX. Priez pour lui!"

In the centuries which have passed since that in which Du Guesclin lived, France has indeed had

MEMORIAL TOMB OF DU GUESCLIN IN THE CHURCH OF ST. LAURENT AT LE PUY

FROM A DRAWING BY L. SAGOT

sons who by heroic deeds, distinguished service, or immortal works, have contributed to her glory, and have written their names high upon her roll of honour, and whose busts she has placed in conspicuous niches in her Pantheon; but to few of her sons in the past does she owe so much, and to none does she owe more.

To the invincible patriotism and military genius of Bertrand du Guesclin, France gratefully attributes the early maintenance of the conception and the foundation for the final accomplishment of French unity.

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